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BAGHDAD FROM THE NORTH.

TRAVELS

IN

KOORDISTAN, MESOPOTAMIA,

&c.

INCLUDING

AN ACCOUNT OF PARTS OF THOSE COUNTRIES

HITHERTO UNVISITED BY EUROPEANS.

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTER AND MANNERS

OF THE

KOORDISH AND ARAB TRIBES.

83454

BY J. BAILLIE FRASER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"THE KUZZILBASH," "A WINTER'S JOURNEY TO PERSIA," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

LETTER I.

Leave Baghdad—Seleucia—Ctesiphon.—Arab Sheikhs.—Tauk-e-Kesra. — Cross the Jezreerah to Mahâwil. —Ancient Sites. — Wandering in the Dark. — Principal Ruins of Babylon. — The Mujellibeh.—View from its Summit.—El-Kasr. — Hill of Amrân. —Hillah.—The Euphrates.—Impressions of the Day.—An Arab Friend.—Pilgrim Servants . . . . . Page 1

LETTER II.

The Birs-e-Nimrood. — Speculations on the mode of its Overthrow.— View from its Summit. — Conjectures as to its Origin, Use, and Identity with the Tower of Babel.—Bursif, or Borsippa. —A disagreeable Surprise.—Insolent Soldiery.—A Friend in Need and a cold Supper.—Antiques of Various Eras . . 20

LETTER III.

A New Year's Wish. — Leave Hillah. — Contrast between the Turkish Governor and our Arab Host. — The Pilgrims return. —

Mode of Cultivation. — Al-Heimer. — Fellah Arabs. — A dreary Ride.—Cold New Year's Night.—Hunger and Thirst.—Marsh on Fire.—Singular Chase.—Camp of the Zobeid.—The Sheikh.—Fair Offer.—Cold Quarters.—Iskhuriah.—Feast of an Arab Sheikh.—Hospitable Expenditure . . . . . Page 33

LETTER IV.

The Guide Nuisance.—Desert Ride and Bivouac.—Alarm.—Display of Arab Courage.—More dangerous Incident and Providential Escape. — Second Bivouac. — Short Commons. — Friendly Meeting. — Manœuvre. — Reluctant Hospitality. — Arab Honesty —Threatening of a "Row."—The Ben-i-Rikâb.—More Attempts at Thieving.—Primitive Husbandry.—Mâdân Arabs.—Their Character and Abodes.—More ancient Sites.—Serious Obstacle.—Mode of Crossing a deep Creek.—Another Night with the Mâdâns.—Crossing the Euphrates.—Um-Ghyer, a curious Ruin.—First Montefic Camp — Origin and present Condition of the Montefic. — First View of the Montefic Camp.—The Sheikh Absent.—His Employment 58

LETTER V.

Sook-u-Shiookh.—Its Bazaars.—Difficulty of procuring Lodgings.—Trade of the Place.—A Persian Friend.—Mode of Feeding Guests at Free Cost.— Commerce and its effects.—A Character.—Extortion.—The Sheikh's Tent.—Assembly—and Appearance—His conversation—and Coffee.—Leaves us in the Lurch.—We lose a Companion.—Beauties of Sook-u-Shiookh.—We follow the Sheikh to Koote.—Speculations regarding our Homeward Course.—Value of a Sheikh's Promise.—Second Interview with his Highness.—Doings thereat. — Sheikh's Gift.—We Commence our Return.—The Sheikh's Cousin.—Disposal of his Highness's Presents 105

LETTER VI.

Recross the Euphrates.—An Instance of Oppression.—Sunkhera. — Workha. — Marashedieh Arabs. — Characteristic Meal. — A Sleepless Night.—Til-Eide.—Vast Mounds and Ancient Vestiges. — Guttubeh. — Camp of the Toghiah Arabs. — Sites. — Bivouac.—Great Cold.—Miss the Sheikh Zobeid's Camp, and fall in with that of the Shummur.—Bad Conduct of our Guides, and Extortion of our Hosts.—Obliged to retrace our way Southward to the Sheikh's Camp.—Sad Confusion and Want there.—More Trouble about Guides. — Reach Shamlee. — Zibliyeh. — Moollah Allee's Simplicity. — Moving Sand-hills. — Course to Mahawil.—Arrive at Baghdad . . . . . Page 135

LETTER VII.

News, on our Arrival at Baghdad, from Persia.—State of that Country.—Expedition to Ager Kouf—its Height and Construction. —An Accident.—Preparations for returning homewards . 160

LETTER VIII.

Leave Baghdad.—Caravanserai Chôle.—Ferry over the Diala.—A bold Thief well trounced.—Bakoubah.—Supposed Site of Destaghird.—A furious Storm. — Shehrewân. — Khanakee.—Kars-e-Shireen.—Eeliaut Robbers.—Mâdan Arabs near Zohâb.—Pool-e-Zohâb.—Pass and Town of Kerrend.—Haroonabad.—Reach Kermansha.—The Vizier.—Solymaun Khan Gourâun—his House—the Palace—and Prince 166

LETTER IX.

Discomforts of Persian Cities in Rain or Snow.—Leave Kermanshah.—Besittoon and its Antiquities.—Inconvenient Hospitality.

—Lose our Road.—Snow and Ice.—Prospect of Starvation averted by a strong measure.—Temple of Diana at Kengaver.—Seyedabad.—Cold Lodgings.—Uncomfortable Anticipations.—Pass of Seyedabad.—An awkward Rencounter.—Fray the Second.—Seyeds and Hadjees.—Reach Hamadan.—Comfortless Caravanserai.—Parting with Servants.—Visit to the Tomb of Esther at Hamadan.

Page 195

LETTER X.

Leave Hamadan.—Beebeekabad.—Frozen Morass.—Wastes of Snow.—Gaugemnar.—Sore Eyes.—Courcys.—Shemereen.—Its two Chiefs.—The Secret of how to keep Warm.—Severe Mountain March, and Descent into the Plains.—Pleasant Sight of Familiar Objects, and Arrival at Assiaubeg. 224

LETTER XII.

Robaut-e-Kereem.—Reach Tehran.—Successful Completion of my Journey.—Aspect of the Capital under its new Master.—Visit to the Sipurdâr and to Count Simonitch.—Members of the Russian Mission 238

LETTER XIII.

Some Particulars relative to the late Shah's Death, and the Accession of the young Monarch, Mahomed Shah.—The late King's Journey to Ispahan.—Motives of that Journey.—Its progress.—His death.—The Firmaun Firmaee assumes the Ensigns of Royalty.—News of the Shah's Death reach Tabreez.—Extreme Difficulty found by the British Envoy there to rouse the Prince and Kaymookâm to action.—Great Exertions of the Envoy and British Officers.—Extraordinary conduct of the Persian Authorities.—The Army Marches, the Advance under Sir H. B. Lind-

say.—An Army despatched by the Zil-e-Sultaun to oppose the Prince's Progress.—Disbands and joins the Prince's Force.—His Royal Highness arrives at Tehrân—is crowned King there.—After great Delay a Force despatched to subdue the South of Persia.—King's Subjection to the Authority of his Minister.

Page 246

LETTER XIV.

The Hakeem Bashee.—Visit to the Minister.—Meerza Allee.—The Kaymookâm.—A promising Conference abruptly broken up.—Another Interview.—A tough and wily Argumentator.—Dietetics.—A strange Meal—and an unsatisfactory interview.—Audience of His Majesty.—A last Visit to the Kaymookâm—singular Place of Reception.—A strong Dose of Truth.—News from Home.—Speculations.—Hadjee Aga.—A Persian Breakfast.—A Russian Breakfast.—Ispahan taken by Sir H. B. Lindsay, and the Firmaun Firmaee's Army defeated near Muxood Beggee.—Continued perversity of the Kaymookâm.—His Character.—England's Responsibility to Persia.—The Shah and the Bone Setters.—News from Khorasan 263

LETTER XV.

Leave Tehran.—Chupper.—Chupperchees and their Horses.—Suleimaniah.—Mahomedabad.—Lose our way.—Goomree.—Casveen.—Difficulties of proceeding.—Abhur.—Extreme Cold.—Dying Camel.—Sutanieh.—Zenjaun.—The Hakim of Armaghana.—Akhend.—Kafflan-Koh.—Meeana.—Severe Stage to Toorkomanchai.—Oujân.—Tabreez.—New Route.—The Ameer-e-Nizâm.—Hakim of Khooe.—Hollow Civility.—A weary Stage.—Snug Quarters at Khara Ziazeen.—Boundary of Armenia.—Tedious Progress.—Makoo.—Allee Khan.—A bitter night's Ride.—The Jelâlee Koords.—Bayazeed.—Diadeen.—Kar-Ecclesia.—

Topra Kallah. — Seydee Khan. — Storm-stayed there. — Severe Struggle in the Pass of Dehâ.—A bitter Gale.—Hassan Kalleh.—A last Struggle.—Erzeroom . . . . . Page 295

LETTER XVI.

Preparations.—Measures for putting down Thieves.—Unlucky Start. — Ashkallah.—Irâkh. — An old Halting-place.—Koords.—Snow again.—Elma Dagh.—Chifflick.—Sheerannee.—Familiar Scenery. — A gallop to Kara Hissar. — A nervous Stage to Kulee Hissar. — Disappointment and Delay. — Cold weather. —Coffee. — Baking. — Interesting Scenery. — Niskar. — Tocât. — Toorkhal. — A Dilemma. — Drowsiness. — Amasia. — Marsteewan. — Drekler Dagh.—Ride in the Dark. — Surmâs-e-Kiayah. — Hadjee Humza. — Successful Remonstrance. — Tosia — Khoja-Hissâr. — Karajurân.— Karajillâr. —The Hour of Rest. — Humâmloo. — Bitter Night's Ride. — Gheriza. — Boli — its Plains and Pass. — Ducheh. — Severe Stage to Khunduc. — Wet Ride to Sabanjah.—Ismîd.—Change of Conveyance.—Custom-house Interference. — Rough Driving. — Reach Constantinople 344

LETTER XVII.

Anxieties of a Traveller.—Interesting Rencounters.—Therapia. —Magnificent Plane-tree. — The Bosphorus. — Constantinople.— Mosques. — Cisterns. — Seraskier's Tower. — Madhouse. — The Hippodrome. — The Serai. — Aqueducts. — The Et-Maidaun.— Dancing Dervishes. — March of Improvement. — Gradual Changes affecting even the Ladies.—Turkey and Poland.—Speculations. 387

LETTER XVIII.

Start from Constantinople.—Sillivria.—Rain and Mud.—Chorli. —Bourgos.—Eskee Baba.—Apsa.—Adrianople.—Heavy Rain.—

Ibepcheh. — Hermanlee. — Bulgarian Haymakers. — Simple Bivouac. — Eskew. — Philipopoli. — Hard Galloping. — Irresistible Drowsiness. — Ihtumân. — Sopia. — Hard Riding. — Bulgarian Costume. — Khalkhallee. — Expense of Posters. — Ak-Palanka. — A Tumble. — The last Balcan. — Robbers. — Tower of Skulls. — Nissa. — Frontiers of Servia. — Nightingales. — Active Suragee. — Delay at Jagodina. — Trick prevented. — Tedious Ride. — Light-hearted Traveller. — Servian Fare and Music. — Caution to Travellers. — Adieu to Turkish Posting. — Rest . . Page 409

LETTER XIX.

Austrian Guard-houses. — Entrance into Limbo. — Ceremonies thereon. — Lodgings. — Arrangements. — A Day in Quarantine. — Description of the Lazaretto. — Ceremonies and Arrangements on Exit. — A Supper. — National Dishes and Games. — Arrival of Courier. — Start from Semlin. — Bad Roads and Horses. — Carlovitz. — Peterwaradin. — Keep the Right Bank of the Danube. — Sclavonian Scenery. — Essek its Capital. — Fünfkerkhen. — Post-horses found by the Proprietors of Estates. — Grand Kanitza. — Stein-en-Anger. — Guntz. — Oldenburgh. — Reach Vienna. — Arrangements. — Leave Vienna. — Rapid Course to Frankfort, Brussels, and Home 448

TRAVELS

IN

KOORDISTAN AND MESOPOTAMIA.

LETTER I.

Leave Baghdad. — Seleucia.—Ctesiphon.— Arab Sheikhs.—Tauk-e-Kesra. — Cross the Jezreerah to Mahâwil. — Ancient Sites.—Wandering in the Dark.—Principal Ruins of Babylon.—The Mujellibeh.—View from its Summit.—El-Kasr.—Hill of Amrân.—Hillah.—The Euphrates.—Impressions of the Day.—An Arab Friend.—Pilgrim Servants.

Hillah, or Old Babylon, 28th December.

HERE we are, dear ——, once more in motion, thank Heaven! and on our intended route. On the 22nd everything was in readiness; but we were detained chiefly by a high southerly wind, which raised such a surge in the river that they have been obliged, as on all similar occasions, to open the bridge of crazy boats, lest they should sink and the fabric be destroyed. We tried to get the horses over in gooffahs, but they would not look at the clumsy conveyances, so that we were forced to endure the delay. On the 23rd, our patience was simi-

larly tried: the wind blew a perfect gale, so that we were forced to content ourselves with our comfortable quarters at Colonel Taylor's.

On the 24th, the bridge having been re-united, our horses and baggage were enabled to pass, and having left the town by the Hillah gate at nine o'clock in the morning, we directed our course towards the ruins of Seleucia and Ctesiphon. A goodly cavalcade we formed in all; for, with Mr. Finlay, Dr. Ross, and the servants, together with the Arab guide, we numbered not less than fifteen persons. This guide, who is furnished by the Zobeid Sheikh, is a tall, gaunt, meagre negro, with thick lips, great buck teeth, and prominent white eyes; remarkably grave and stupid-looking, and silent withal, save when, without either rhyme or reason, or any apparent cause, he bursts out with Stentorian voice into a most *selcouth* roar of song! The morning was foggy; but when, after some hours, the fog had cleared away, it was a delightful relief, after the long confinement in Baghdad, to find ourselves at large in the open expanse, even of the desert:—desert it may be called in so far as it bore no traces of man, but the soil was fit for anything: it was, in short, the fat alluvial soil of Mesopotamia, the garden of the world of yore, though now only producing some bushes of a species of dwarf acacia (*mimosa agrestis*?—the seed of which is called St. John's bread), capers, and certain salsuginous herbs. Our ride was only varied by crossing the bed of an ancient canal, now dried up; and in five hours and a half, we found ourselves entering the circuit of old Seleucia, part of the walls

of which still remain, and are of a very considerable height.

The two cities of Ctesiphon (or Ul-Madain), and Seleucia, were built on each side of the river, and opposite each other, though flourishing at different periods. Of the latter, the only remains are the mounds of a great wall which, in fact, embraced both banks, and which inclosed an immense space of ground, over which are scattered abundance of other mounds of various dimensions; but all alike bearing testimony to having been once the abodes of man, in the fragments of brick, pottery, broken glass, and other such relics, with which they are thickly strewed. By the mere passing traveller, who cannot afford time to wander over and examine such ruins with the science and patient perseverance of an antiquary, little is to be gained from inspecting them, beyond the power of having to say that he has seen them, and has actually been on such and such a site, with the feelings which such vestiges of undoubted antiquity may give rise to — yet assuredly this is something, and something, too, worth toiling for.

The ruins, or rather ruin, of Ctesiphon (for there is but one relic of that once rich and noble city), is calculated to excite far different sensations; for no one can view the Tauk-e-Kesra without being strongly impressed with the gigantic grandeur of the building, of which it must have formed a part, and the magnificent conceptions of the monarch who raised it. There is no Eastern palace with which I am acquainted, which possesses such a façade,

or, if we suppose it to have been merely a gateway, such an entrance. The Ali Capi at Ispahan, or the gates of the Palace at Dehlee, magnificent structures in themselves, sink into insignificance beside the Tauk-e-Kesra; for which of them can boast of an archway more than one hundred feet high?

We did not, however, visit this splendid relic until the next morning, when, not without some trouble and manœuvring, we procured a gooffah to cross the river. It was a dark morning, and the sun rose in clouds of orange and blood-red, right behind the Tauk, which thus rose strongly defined against the increasing light. It was a singularly striking effect. Around it, amongst numerous irregular mounds, we found a whole camp of Arab tents; but the Sheikh of the tribe, a most blackguard, truculent-looking villain, whose huge red-brown nose was guilty of breaking the ninth commandment, if its owner did not indulge abundantly in forbidden potations, came over to welcome us, and all was right. Another fellow of the same description, however, came galloping up with six or eight ragamuffins, to know who we were; and having heard, he addressed the Sheikh saying—"It is well for these men that they are with you, for had it not been so, by Allah I would have stripped them naked!" and, Heaven knows, he *looked* his wishes to the life, if he did not try to put them into execution. One of the party, however, laughed at him and said—"Perhaps it is just as well for you that you did not try—look here, and see if

you think we are men to be plundered for nothing;" and he showed him my double-barrelled detonator and a brace of double-barrelled pistols—a sight which had an evident effect upon his courage, and as obviously increased his respect. He examined the gun particularly; and on returning it, said bitterly—"Ah! the curse of God be on the gun that shoots without flint or fire!" He however followed us to the river side, and remained hovering about till we crossed.

I will not here attempt an elaborate description of the Tauk, but only say that it consists of a façade of more than three hundred feet long, in which there is an archway one hundred and six feet high, entering into what must have been one of the noblest halls in the world; the rest of the façade on either side being embellished with four tiers of pilasters, and small arches like windows. This is almost all that remains of the building, and even this, though formed of the most exquisite brickwork, has suffered so severely from the hand of time, that we can only guess at the character and appearance of the whole when complete. It is surrounded by a number of mounds, and the country, to a great extent about, bears everywhere vestiges of ancient sites, in the broken bricks, glass, pottery, porcelain, &c. that abounds. While we were looking around us, an Arab came up and offered for sale a rock-crystal cylinder and antiques of various sorts which he had picked up not far from the place where we stood: coins, intaglios, brass images, and such things are frequently found by the wandering Arabs, or shep-

herds who graze their flocks here. I took two views of this interesting ruin, which, I regret to say, is going rapidly to decay from the assaults both of man and of the seasons, and left it, after lingering and admiring it for several hours; but we were unfortunately pressed for time, being anxious to reach a khan or caravanserai named Mahâwil, before nightfall—so, after re-crossing, we took a hasty breakfast, and were on our horses by half an hour after noon.

Our ride, so long as daylight lasted, served at least to convince us how populous the land must have been in times of old; for scarcely did we traverse a mile of it without passing over the site of some ancient city, or town, or village. Sometimes we found a whole tract covered with fragments of bricks, pottery, and glass; and it was remarkable, that all of these sites are utterly bare of vegetation, so that, even independent of the appearance of débris, we could tell when we were crossing one. Mounds, also, of the same substances were numerous; but low, and altogether shapeless. Sections of funereal vases and coffins, which we observed protruding from them, marked them as receptacles for the reliques of the dead. We likewise crossed a number of old canals, all dry and useless now; and, in short, no one, who has had any experience in these matters, could doubt, from the vestiges so thickly spread over this day's march, that, either some immense city had once flourished here, or, what is more probable, that the whole country, from Seleucia to Babylon, had once been

covered with the abodes of men, in every various shape and form of city, town, and village.

For more than an hour before sunset, we had observed the desert dotted with many herds of camels, which with their drivers appeared all bending their steps to one point; and just a little before the sun disappeared, on mounting one of the *tills*—as the mounds of ancient sites are called by the Arabs—in order to look round us before dark, we found ourselves overlooking the first extensive Arab encampment I had seen. It stretched to the right and left on the plain below us, as far on either hand as we could see, a confused mass of tents, and human beings, and animals, while the latter were still streaming towards it from various quarters; I never saw so many camels together before; I am confident there must have been hundreds of thousands of these, besides other animals, and tents for four or five thousand people; they absolutely blackened the earth. These were the Jerboah Arabs, who, driven southward by the Aneiza, had come down to the upper grounds of the Zobeid, poking about for what they could pick up in the way of pasture, until their own country should be free from the enemy: it was a very picturesque and interesting sight.

Night fell, and the crackling of the potsherds under our horses' feet told us that we were still trampling on what had been human habitations; but the night grew dark and cloudy, and as without stars or compass, or land-mark of any sort, nor even the slighest track to guide him, even an Arab

must be at fault, the natural result was, that we lost our way, and for several hours we wandered about in cold and darkness, stumbling over broken ground, plunging into dry canals, and scrambling over mounds, till at length we held it advisable to call a council of war, when our guide gaped in astonishment at finding that, for some time past, he had been going nearly *north* instead of south. We now took the matter into our own hands; and knowing the direction of the Hillah road, pursued it so nearly that a muleteer of the party discovered where we were, just within two hundred yards of the Nasseriyeh khan, or caravanserai, to which, weary, chilled, and hungry, we forthwith adjourned. But our troubles were not yet ended; for it was not without much difficulty, and a regular *row*, that we got lodged at all, and then we were likely to go supperless to bed, in consequence of a quarrel among my servants, among whom the apple of discord appeared to have been thrown, and who required some sharp chastisement before order could be restored.

While sitting thus, comfortless and cold, with scarcely a handful of weeds to make a blaze and warm us, you will not wonder that thoughts of the pleasant doings of this merry season, in our own well-beloved land, should rise to our remembrance, and of the circle of dear ones that might be gathered round the fireside of our homes, thinking, no doubt, upon their absent travellers. How might it fare with them? In the many chances of this changeful world, what breaches might not have been made in these family groups, even since we bade

them adieu: it was an anxious thought, and one which it does not do for travellers to dwell upon; so we cheered ourselves as well as we could, swallowed our scanty meal as soon as our sulky servants would give it to us, and stretched ourselves to sleep upon our carpets for the night.

Next morning, the 26th, after a more regular court-martial on my servants, followed by some well-merited punishment, and a good dose of admonition to the whole, on the subject of peace and unanimity, which, I doubt not, met the usual fate of such homilies, we left the khan and pushed on towards the ruins of the mighty Babylon. Already were we within the precincts attributed to its walls, and the vestiges of mounds and débris soon increased upon us. By and by the huge form of the *Mujellibeh* rose to our view, overtopping the intervening banks of several dry canals. This ruin is one of the principal reliques supposed to belong to ancient Babylon; but, before going further, it may be proper to mention what are the most remarkable and important of these remains, though without entering either into any minute description, or attempting to reconcile the various opinions that are entertained by the learned regarding their origin and identity with the celebrated structures of antiquity. For these matters I must refer you to the works of more able and laborious travellers; nor can you be at a loss with the learning of Rennel and D'Anville, and many other sages, in their closets—the observations of Rich, Buckingham, and Porter, besides other travellers of greater antiquity,

upon the spot: *I* shall only think of relating what I saw.

The ruins of Babylon, as they are supposed to be, then, consist of an immense extent of low rounded (or amorphous) mounds, of the same nature as those I have described in our last march, and of which, upon the right or west bank of the Euphrates, the lofty mass, called the Birs-e-Nimrood, is pre-eminent. On the left, there is, first, the Mujellibeh, which we have just reached; secondly, directly south of this is the Kasr, a heap of buildings, supposed to represent the great imperial palace with the hanging gardens, close to which is a considerable mass of mounds, which some imagine to be a smaller palace. Still further south is the hill of Amrân; a more extensive, though less lofty mass than the last, which must comprise the reliques of many and important edifices. To the E.N.E. at the distance of about six miles from the Mujellibeh, is found an insulated and lofty conical mound, named Al-Heimer; and, lastly, a considerable conical mound called the Tuebo, and by some considered to be the N.E. angle of the ancient city, stands about fifteen miles to the north of those just enumerated. There are, besides, a vast number of inferior heaps, some of which indicate the courses of canals that irrigated the country, or supplied distant quarters of the city with water, and some are the remains of ramparts which probably inclosed and defended the principal edifices.

To proceed. The Mujellibeh is a solid quadrangular mound, the sides of which face the car-

dinal points. Its height I was not inclined to estimate at more than ninety or a hundred feet in the loftiest part; but I observe that Sir. R. Porter assigns to it that of one hundred and forty feet, and another traveller (Mignon), since his time, calls it one hundred and thirty-nine; so that I must, no doubt, have been deceived, having had neither time nor means to measure it. In the same manner travellers differ as to the dimensions of its base. Sir R. Porter sets down the length of its sides at five hundred and fifty-two and five hundred and fifty-one feet, for those to the north and south, and two hundred and thirty each for those to the east and west. Mignon says he measured them carefully, and that the visible north face is two hundred and seventy-four yards; the south, two hundred and fifty-six; the east, two hundred and twenty-six; and the west, two hundred and forty. Believing that all this had already been settled by Rich, Buckingham, Porter, and others, I confess I did not measure any of the faces; and, my time being limited, so that I could not hope to make new discoveries, or add to the light which it is supposed has been shed over these ruins, and the dark subject of their origin and history, by the laborious inquiries of antiquaries, I restricted my examination to the satisfaction of my own curiosity, and can therefore tell you only what I saw. This in the Mujellibeh was little enough. It is now but a mass of crumbled and crumbling bricks, both raw and fire-baked, mingled with the usual débris of pottery, glass, and slag, in a confusion worthy of

its name which, according to some, is a corruption of Mukalibeh, or "the overturned." Indeed, so completely have the form and structure of this remarkable mass been destroyed by time and season, and the hand of man, that, to a passing observer like myself, it seems vain to conjecture with any hope of correctness at its former shape, extent, or uses. The under part appears to have been pierced by continuous rows of small vaults or chambers, which may have merely served to support the superstructure, though some bear the resemblance of habitations. Mr. Rich found in them earthenware, coffins with skeletons, and urns, which favour the opinion that it had, at some period, been used as a receptacle for the dead. It is furrowed by the rains into thousands of little ravines, and the slope is, in most places, so easy as to make the ascent to its top a matter of no difficulty. The platform of the summit is very unequal, and riven, like the sides, into holes and furrows, in some of which can be seen the form and structure of the brickwork, both sun and fire-dried, of which it is composed. From hence, too, a wide and desolate view is obtained. A multitude of mounds and canals stretch on all sides as far as the eye can reach. On the one side rose the red cone of Al-Heimer and on the other, at a greater distance, the still more imposing form of the Birs. The modern town of Hillah, distant between three and four miles, was almost lost among the mounds of antiquity, and chiefly discernible from its date-tree groves.

After lingering an hour or two about this singular and grisly monument, we passed on to the less lofty, though more extensive and still more disturbed, mound, known by the name of *El-kasr*, or the palace; supposed by some to have been the site of the royal palace of Nebuchadnezzar, and the hanging gardens of his queen Amytis. If so; alas for the change! Whatever beauty or splendour there may have been in the original fabric, it is now buried in ignoble heaps of broken bricks and pottery; an utterly shapeless mass of rubbish alone remains, cut into numberless ravines, and dug into great holes, in both of which the hands of the Arab has assisted the effects of weather. Sir R. Porter calls it seventy feet in height, and, from the sections made into its substance, it appears that fire-burned bricks have been used in far greater abundance in its construction than in that of the Mujellibeh. There are, indeed, remaining still erect some fragments of walls composed of most exquisite brickwork, so firmly cemented together that it is almost impossible to separate the bricks from one another. The whole of this mass has been turned over and over by the Arabs for the sake of the bricks it affords, and which are transported from hence to Baghdad, where they fetch a high price; and in some of the holes formed in extracting them, and dug nearly as deep as the foundations, I observed large masses of stones, broken up by the Arabs for their own purposes, which must have formed part of the original building. In one of these cavities lay the lion of black or grey

granite, which was discovered by Mr. Rich, and still remains one of the *lions* of the place; but it is fast sinking back into the rubbish from whence it was dug, and probably will, ere long, be covered up from view.*

Here we picked up various fragments of alabaster vases, and of glazed tiles, having figures of various things, men and animals, in their proper colours, enamelled on them in relief. These are supposed to have formed part of the ornaments of the hanging gardens, described by Diodorus, Quintus Curtius, and others, which are said to have been embellished by a range of hunting-scenes, representing the chase of various birds and beasts. I also found several fragments of brass and rock crystal, but nothing of much value. After looking at the solitary tree (a species of tamarisk), which the Arabs pretend grew in one night to shelter Allee (who fled there from the battle of Hillah) from a peg which he stuck in the ground to fasten his horse to, we quitted these singular and shapeless ruins to glance at another mass of still more extensive but totally amorphous rubbish, known as the hill of Amrân. There was nothing here to detain us. We were not able to examine the bank overhanging the river, which is filled with sepulchral vases, as the water was so high as to wash its foot with a rapid and whirling current; but by leaning over from the top, we could discover some of the vases protruding from its face.

By this time the day was far spent, and we rode

* This lion, I have since heard, turned out to be an elephant, with its snout broken off.

at a rapid pace to Hillah, through a fine tract of date-gardens, which formed a handsome avenue; and, crossing multitudes of canals which here seem to have been conveyed to a point, we rode over a bridge of boats, not above half the length of that in Baghdad; but in better condition, and entered the modern representative of the ancient capital of Babylonia. The town, though sadly shattered, has externally a neat and rather inviting appearance for an Asiatic city. It extends on both sides of the Euphrates, the two parts being joined by the aforesaid bridge; and the view, both up and down the river, though not very extensive, being varied with houses and date-groves intermingled, is pleasing, from its verdure and the life it receives from the water and boats. I was surprised and somewhat disappointed at the first view of the celebrated Euphrates. It is, certainly, not above half the size of the Tigris; and at a point a little below the bank of the sepulchral vases, it could not have been more than from seventy to eighty yards broad.

On examining the impression left on my mind by what we this day had seen of these ruins, or rather vestiges, of the celebrated Babylon, I find it to be just what I had anticipated. I could have made a drawing of the Mujellibeh from the accounts I had heard of it, and what I had seen of other ruins of a similar character. The Kasr disappointed me sadly in height and lack of imposing appearance—not in extent, for it is more extensive than I imagined; and as for the rest, you might just as well have looked upon any similar extent of rough, barren,

irregular ground. The long mounds indicating canals, and branching off to a great distance, were interesting through the ideas they suggested; and there was something striking in the solitude and desert aspect of the *coup d'œil* which was obtained from the summit of the Mujellibeh, that undoubtedly recalled to the spectator's mind the remarkable fulfilment of the numerous prophetic denunciations of Divine wrath, which we find throughout the Scriptures; but the manner of their being recalled was not so impressive as might be supposed.—Babylon, though utterly ruined, and the haunt of loathsome creatures, is not altogether deprived of the vestiges of man's vicinity —you see villages and date-groves, and cultivation in various places around, and the walls of Hillah remind one that something of a city exists within view: so that the image of utter desolation is disturbed, and the frame of mind with which the scene is viewed is apt to suffer a corresponding re-action. On the whole, I was certainly deeply interested by the view of these relics of what once was one of the wonders of the world; but as to all those indescribable emotions which travellers seem to hold it a duty to feel in such places, and particularly on this spot, I must plead guilty to a sin against feeling and propriety, if such it be; for truly I experienced little of them. The truth is, that those who are accustomed to scenes of wide-spread barren nature, and whose imaginations have been somewhat *dulled* by the hard and matter of fact realities of life, require something more intrinsically striking and tangible than anything that appears at Babylon, to call forth their enthusiams; and such, I confess, was the case with me. I was more

impressed with the solitary ghastliness of the old city of Eerij, at Vuromeen near Tehrân, with its old, white, furrowed wall standing almost entire, but utterly tenantless and deserted, than with all I saw this day. The one was like the skeleton of a mighty place—it still retained some fearful connection with humanity — it put one in mind of the terrible spectre-ship of Coldridge, which, deserted by her crew, had drifted for years and years over the ocean, till bleached to fearful whiteness by the storms of an unknown period. The other is that skeleton mouldering into dust, which we cannot distinguish from other clay—like the stranded vessel that has rotted on the beach, and whose timbers, already fallen to pieces, suggest no notion of the gallant ship that, long instinct with life, breasted the waves of the ocean.

The Euphrates, notwithstanding my disappointment in its size, was a far more interesting and exciting object. There is something in the living stream which you can commune with: ever changing and yet still the same, it speaks to you as a thing of life and says—"I am the same as in the days of old—since time was I alter not. I have seen generations pass away, and yet I remain fresh and youthful as ever." The Euphrates *is* the same as in the days when the captive children of Israel sat by its stream and wept, and assuredly the sight of that stream had by far more power, on me at least, to call forth associations with sacred writ than the heaps of dust, however gigantic, that lay scattered along its margin.

We had sent our people on before us—*they* had jogged on through the mouldering heaps as unconcerned as if Nebuchadnezzar, or Cyrus, or Darius, or any of the worthies that have figured here of old, had never existed. We found them established in a very ruinous and very dirty, but very extensive and once splendid, house, which had been built by the former Allee Pashah for one of his wives; and scarcely had we established ourselves in one corner of our suite, when an old Arab friend of the Doctor's came to remonstrate with him for taking up his quarters anywhere but in *his* house, and declaring that not one of us should eat or drink an article while at Hillah except what he should provide, at the same time desiring to know what we most relished. In accordance with this declaration he sent us forthwith a very fine dish of dates, sour milk and cream, with some meat ready cooked, and bread enough for all our servants.

This evening I had another specimen of the pleasures of travelling in a very disagreeable affair with my servants. We were now within a day's journey of Kerbelah, one of the holiest places of Sheah pilgrimage; and all my Persian servants being of that persuasion, and having been prevented, by the troubled state of the roads, from visiting the shrine while remaining at Baghdad, they came to me in a body and requested permission to do so now. Such a request proved the small consideration they had for my convenience, and I made no scruple of letting them know my sentiments on the occasion. Here was I to be left to myself in a strange place, without a soul to look

after eleven horses and mules, and take care of my own baggage, while these fellows should go to gain the appellation of "*Kerbelaee*" (one who has made a pilgrimage to Kerbelah)—for, as to true devotion, I cannot give them credit for a grain of it. I told them flatly that if all went, all might stay there for me; for that I would give no permission, and that by so doing they would forfeit all the rewards to which, by remaining with me, they might entitle themselves; that, however, as I did not wish to be considered unreasonable or tyrannical, I should permit any four, that was, one half of them, to go, provided they pledged themselves to be back on the evening of the second day. The result, after a good deal of dispute, was, that the required partition was made, and that two of the old servants and two I had hired in Baghdad remained with me, while four of the Persians, including three of the most efficient, went next morning to Kerbelah.

LETTER II.

The Birs-e-Nimrood.—Speculations on the Mode of its Overthrow. — View from its Summit. — Conjectures as to its Origin, Use, and Identity with the Tower of Babel. — Bursif, or Borsippa.—A disagreeable Surprise. — Insolent Soldiery. — A Friend in Need and a cold Supper.—Antiques of Various Eras.

THE arrangements rendered necessary by the departure of my servants, detained us in the house later than should have been the case; but after an excellent breakfast, chiefly provided by our Arab friend, in which a dish of clotted cream that might have challenged Devonshire, made a principal figure, we mounted and rode to see the Birs-e-Nimrood, which, as you are aware, is supposed to be the remains of the original Tower of Babel, though others are at a loss to reconcile its situation with that assigned by ancient writers to the temple of Belus, built by Nebuchadnezzar; and which they presume to have been identical with that built by the early post-deluvians, in defiance of the Almighty.

We rode to it over a perfect flat, bordering on a swamp, but all cultivated; and reached its base in little more than two hours, having stopped to shoot at game more than once by the way, so that I estimated the distance at eight miles. The view on the Hillah side is intercepted by the very large

mound of Ibrahim-ul-Khaleel. Having cleared that by ascending it or going round its base, the Birs is seen as a lofty irregular pillar, built upon an earthen hill, and rising from a vast level desert; for though there are numerous mounds of various sizes, far and near around it, and the ground is covered with bricks and potsherds, the general surface is as flat as water. The height of mound and pillar, taken together, seemed to me about one from hundred and eighty to two hundred feet; but I understand that this is short of the truth, the former alone rising two hundred feet above the level of the plain, while the latter attains a height of thirty-five feet more; in all two hundred and thirty-five feet. On nearer approach, you discover that this supposed earthen mound is in reality a mass of sun-dried bricks, mingled with fragments of kiln-burnt bricks, of various colours, yellow and red, out of which protrudes a lofty mass of the most exquisite brick masonry possible, which is the pillar aforesaid. To trace the design, or original form, of the structure seems to me impossible; because both top and sides are covered with the débris that ages have caused to moulder down, leaving only the corners of the solid brickwork here and there peeping out. That the complete subversion must have been very ancient appears from this, that the fragments of brick, which now form a sort of M'Adamised pavement over the whole top and upper parts of the sides, are covered with a lichenous coat, like those of an ancient cairn —a very slow process in so dry a climate; and the

superiority of the bricks used in the upper part of the structure, to those below is equally obvious from the fact that, the former do *not* crumble into dust, while the under ones, which are of larger size, do. I saw no sun-burned bricks used in the centre part of the building, which may be more properly termed the *tower*. On the south-east side, or that next to Hillah, there is a very large mass, formed of sun-dried bricks, now joined to the lower part of the centre; but to me it appears as if this had originally been distinct, and that it had been united by the washing down of débris, from both having filled up the space between them. There is no corresponding projection on the other sides.

But it is on mounting this mass of brick débris that one begins to comprehend the vastness of the original structure, and the utterness, and extraordinary nature, of the ruin that has overtaken it. On arriving at the summit, you find yourself at the base of a fabric, built, as I have said, of the most singularly beautiful masonry, the bricks being joined with layers of cement, so thin that you are at a loss to understand why you cannot easily separate them from one another; but on trying, you find it next to impossible to do so. This mass, which I estimated at fifty (but which I have since learned is only thirty-five) feet in height, has been rifted in two by a crack through which you can see, and its breadth bears so small a proportion to its height that, were its foundation not connected with the original fabric below, it must long since have given way; as it is, the elements and seasons appear

to have little effect upon it, and it defies the yet more destructive hand of man.

The most striking objects, I think, of the whole, are the remarkable blackened and partly vitrified masses which lie at the foot of the fragment just described, and which, from the disorder in which they are found, appear to have fallen from some greater height than any that now remains. On examination, you find that they consist of brickwork, but so much influenced by the action of fire as to have lost their original character. Even the texture and division between brick and brick has been so much obliterated as to be often indiscernible, and the whole has been converted into a solid mass of the hardest and, with the exception of a few air-bubbles here and there, the closest texture conceivable—I know of no rock so tough and hard. Having no hammer, with a fragment of itself I tried to break off a bit, obviously a single brick, which projected a little from the rest, but with all my force I was unable; and was obliged to take specimens from what was lying about.

The question instantly suggests itself—What have these fire-scathed masses been? and by what means came they to be exposed to so overpowering a degree of heat as they must have undergone? I can conceive nothing less than the continued heat of some glass furnace, sufficient to produce the effect apparent here, — and how could that have been applied at the height they must have occupied when in their proper place? There is nothing to lead to the idea, that much wood could have

been employed in the construction of this fabric, and calculated, as it obviously was originally, to endure for ages, it is highly improbable that any large proportion of so perishable a material should have been used; yet the combustion of some such substance is the only means one can conceive by which such heat could have been here applied. The effect is evidently partial. The tall mass of brickwork that stands upright bears no mark of fire — how is this? We have no Scriptural authority for believing that the Temple of Belus was destroyed by any miraculous manifestation of Divine power; but the Arabs have a tradition that the *Birs* was destroyed by *fire from Heaven.* Thus we have but a choice between the belief of some most extraordinary and inexplicable natural agency, and that of a miracle, to account for the appearances now manifest on this wonderful ruin. The effects of lightning are sometimes tremendous—we hear of its fusing large bolts of metal by a single flash; but terrible, indeed, and nothing short of miraculous must have been those flashes (if lightning it was), that shivered, fused, and overthrew the blackened fragments that strew the summit of this mighty mass of ruins!

The view from this elevated station is correspondingly extensive and impressive. On the one side we could distinguish Nujjeff Ashreff, and on the other Kerbelah, and at five hours' distance appeared a modern building, erected over the tomb of the prophet Ezekiel, a place to which the Jews go on pilgrimage, but where there is nothing to see worth the

journey and the risk. To the west, and stretching from north-west to south, further than the eye could reach, and, in fact, nearly to Bussora, lay a wide waste of water, occasioned by the bursting of the embankments that confined the Euphrates and canal of the ancient Pallacopas. This occurred many years ago, and now the traffic of the country is carried on by means of this inland sea, which is called the *Baher-ul-Nujjeff*, and Nujjeff and Kerbelah are supplied by it with goods shipped near Bussora. On the whole, the Birs is a most striking ruin; and viewed, as we saw it, from the mound of Ibrahim Khaleel, rising from its desert plain, and backed at no great distance by a waste of waters, it formed a truly impressive spectacle—the only monument of ancient Babel that excited in me something like a sense of her former magnificence and power, and of her tremendous fall. It is, indeed, ruined greatness abandoned to utter desertion—truly the "abomination of desolation."

I must, however, here correct a mistake into which I had fallen myself, and into which, therefore, it seems to me likely that you and others may fall, in regard to the state of these ruins. From what I heard, I had taken up an idea that they were surrounded and covered by a wilderness of bushes, weeds, and thorns—the rank vegetation which often mantles over ruined buildings. Perhaps I was led to this idea from hearing them also spoken of as the haunt of wild beasts—"the home of the lion and the adder." Now, so far as jungle and rank vegetation is concerned, I can aver that nothing of the

kind is the case. One of the most unerring marks of an old site is the utter want of vegetation; and so decidedly inimical to the growth of any vegetable is the remains of building here, that I have known the foundations of an old brick wall, though far under the surface, discovered in a garden, by the seeds or plants refusing to grow above it. On none of the mounds I have described, nor on any of the numerous lesser ones that surround them, is there any vegetation whatever; and the whole amount of bushes or herbage on the tract occupied by the ruins, consists of no more than a few salsuginous plants, or a bit of tamarisk on the side of a canal. There can, therefore, be no shelter for the larger and nobler beasts of prey. Lions require thick cover, and love not to expose themselves too far from it; neither do they relish remaining so near the haunts of men, as they would be at the Mujellibeh, or Kasr, which are so close to Hillah and Mahâwil. Hyenas, jackals, and wolves there may be, and no doubt there are; but I suspect Sir R. Porter must have been under a mistake when he talked of seeing three lions taking the air upon the Birs. Lions are not in general so social, and seldom appear more than one at a time.

I have already adverted to the opinion entertained by some, that the Birs represent the Tower of Babel and the ancient Temple of Belus; and, certainly, if height and magnitude were the only points to be considered in the question, the Birs has it hollow; but there is great difficulty in reconciling the scraps of information we glean from ancient authors with

the localities of Babylon, and there are, no doubt, some strong arguments against, as well as for, the title of the Birs to the distinction claimed for it. The first difficulty, perhaps, is to establish what is the plain of Shinâr and what the plain of Dura, on which the tower was built. Again, with reference to heathen authorities, Herodotus and Strabo mention the temple of Belus as being within the city; they also mention the city as being divided by a branch of the Euphrates; but they do not say on which side this great temple was situated. Now the Birs is at least six or seven miles distant from the present course of the Euphrates, and full nine miles from the Kasr and great knot of ruins on the eastern side. How may this agree, in point of probability, with its having been within the walls of ancient Babylon?

Herodotus assigns to the walls of the city a square form, and a circumference of sixty miles. A friend of mine, who has given much attention to this subject, taking these data to work on, has ventured the suggestion, that of this square, the Birs may have formed the south-west angle — Al Heimer, which is just about fifteen miles distant, the south-east angle — the Tueba, rather more, the north-east, —leaving the north-western lost in the marshes, which on that side still, as in former times, surround that portion of the supposed site. This, it is true, would include the Birs within the ancient precincts, and leave the Euphrates in its present channel; but it would thrust the celebrated Temple of Belus or Bel into a corner, which can scarely be

admitted as probable; and accordingly his mind, so far as I can discover, is by no means made up as to the identity of the Temple of Belus and the Birs. He has even ventured on another suggestion, which is worth the attention of the learned. The vast city of Babylon, in time, became divided into districts: in one of these, named Bursif (the Borsippa of Strabo, and other geographers of antiquity), inhabited by Chaldeans (the remains of the Chaldeo-Babylonian empire), and probably by their priests and learned men, this great temple had been raised to their god, which may belong to a somewhat later period than that built by Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore presents a larger mass of ruins. Should this, or something of the sort, be founded on truth, it would account for the otherwise unaccountable name of the Birs, which has no signification in Arabic, but which may, without any of the violence so commonly perpetrated upon words by etymologists, be derivable with ease from Borsippa of the Greeks, and Bursif of the Chaldeans. After all, the subject is so dim in the mists of ages, and the glimpses of light thrown upon it by history are so faint and far between, that I fear all the force of human reasoning and ingenuity applied to an arrangement of the known facts, and assisted even by a personal acquaintance of the localities at the present time, will scarcely add much to our knowledge, or afford the means of deciding with greater preciseness the limits of ancient Babylon, or the nature and description of the structures which are represented by the heaps of rubbish that excite our curiosity and astonishment upon her site.

After lingering several hours upon and round this venerable pile, and taking sketches of it from various points, we turned our horses' heads to Hillah, where a most disagreeable surprise was in preparation, to bring us down from any altitude of enthusiasm to which our visit to the Birs might have conducted us. An event had occurred, in our absence, which afforded us a very clear, but most inconvenient, illustration of the nature of the government of this country. The new governor of Hillah, to whom we had been introduced when at Baghdad, and who had promised us every possible help and accommodation, had arrived at the place, bringing with him a rabble of Arnaout horse or Haitas, some fifty or sixty of whom, being in want of quarters, had coolly come to our house; and, turning servants, cattle, &c. out neck and heels into the street, had quietly taken possession of it themselves. So, on our return at sunset, instead of finding, as we had reason to expect, a good hot dinner ready to renovate our frames and cheer our souls, we found ourselves not only without food, but without even a roof to shelter us for the night.

The Doctor, on hearing how matters stood, went instantly to the Beg with his complaint and the Pashah's firman, but all the reply he could get was, that the great man had gone to his harem, and could not be disturbed until the morning. It now appeared, that when the scuffle first took place, one of our servants had gone to the serai to complain, and that the governor had actually sent his chiaoosh to tell the Arnaouts to give up our house; but they

had informed him, in the broadest and grossest manner, that he might go to the devil and take his master along with him; so having now a shrewd suspicion of what was in reality the fact, namely, that the governor had no power over his own troops, we were forced to submit to our fate, at least for the night, and seek for lodgings where best we might. This, as the sun had set, was no very cheering or hopeful prospect, but our Arab friend came forward in our dilemma, with prompt assistance. "Why did you not come to my house at first?" said he; "and then nothing of all this could have happened; but come now, all is ready, with a hearty welcome;" and, suiting the action to the word, he himself lent the first hand to loading the horses and mules with our luggage, which lay scattered about in the street. And though we sorely felt the want of our Kerbelah pilgrims, we contrived, without any loss of consequence, to transport all our effects to the house of our good friend, which, though smaller, proved, in fact, a better and more comfortable lodging than that we had been turned out of. Once settled, we swallowed our choler as best we might; and making a supper upon a fish which would have been capital when warm, but which, in its cold state, was not well calculated to smooth down our ruffled tempers, we went to bed muttering vows of vengeance against all the Haitas in Mesopotamia. I should not forget to say that our most attentive friend, even while our baggage was being removed, had got his wife to roast for us three desert partridges, which I had shot on the

way to the Birs, but they proved so indomitably tough, that we stuck to the cold fish, which we washed down with that never-to-be-sufficiently-praised beverage, good tea.

Next morning was threatening and dull, and there was nothing to tempt us out of doors; but we had enough of amusement within, in looking over and making selections from the parcels of antiques found about the ruins, and brought to us for sale, principally by Jews, who purchase them from the Arabs. Nothing proves more unanswerably the antiquity of these ruins, or presents a more interesting view of the succession of nations by whom they have been tenanted, than the distinct varieties of antiques and relics found amongst them. Cylinders and seals, marked with the uniform, or arrow-headed characters, common to the bricks of Babylon, the ruins of Persepolis, and those of Koordistan and Armenia; the more choice, and sometimes most exquisitely executed, cameos and intaglios of the Greek artists, together with coins and ornaments of the same era; others, the subjects of which indicate them as productions of the Roman chisel, and the well-known costume and characters of the dynasty of the Sassanides—all are found in abundance, good, bad, and indifferent (though, certainly, the two last qualities predominated), and were offered for our acceptance in exchange for our coin. Then we had our journals to bring up, and our disordered baggage to arrange, so that the time wore on imperceptibly, until the approach of evening, when we had to look for the return of our pilgrim-

servants; but we looked for them in vain, so, after an excellent dinner, furnished partly by my own *artiste*, and partly by our Arab friend, we took to our couches in fear, rather than in hope, as to the chances of starting to-morrow. This morning has settled the question; for, independently of the non-arrival of my truants, torrents of rain set in, through which, in this deep loamy soil, it would have been madness to attempt making our way, so I took to my writing and drawing—never-failing resources on such occasions, coloured in some sketches of the Birs, and hoped for better luck to-morrow.

LETTER III.

A New Year's Wish. — Leave Hillah. — Contrast between the Turkish Governor and our Arab Host. — The Pilgrims return. —Mode of Cultivation.—Al-Heimer.—Fellah Arabs. — Dreary Ride. — Cold New Year's Night. — Hunger and Thirst. — Marsh on Fire. — Singular Chase. — Camp of the Zobeid. — The Sheikh. — Fair Offer. — Cold Quarters. — Iskhuriah. — Feast of an Arab Sheikh. —Hospitable Expenditure.

3rd January, 1835.

A THOUSAND kind wishes, Dear ——, and as many returns of the season as may be for your happiness and comfort; but I breathe these wishes from a strange place — an Arab camp, in greater cold and discomfort than I trust you are exposed to, and far from all those with whom I love to pass such seasons. We left Hillah on the date of my last, by ten o'clock A.M., but only made a short stage of less than ten miles, to a camp of Fellah Arabs, near the last of the Babylonish ruins considered worthy of a stranger's attention, namely, Al-Heimer, a conical mound so called from its red colour. I forgot to mention to you that, on the morning following our trip to the Birs, the governor's treasurer called upon us, professedly as a piece of attention from himself, but, in fact, to feel our pulses on the subject of the insult of the preceding evening. He

assured us, in confidence as it were, that the Pashah himself has no authority over these Arnaouts, nor any power to punish them, as, if pressed, they would probably turn and serve him worse than they had done us. He wished to persuade us to think no more about it, declared that they were *hywâns* (beasts), not worth our notice; in reply to which very consolatory observation, we intimated to him that the insolence we had suffered and the inconvenience we had been put to, were not diminished by the brutality of those who had committed the outrage; that with us, when beasts misbehaved we punished them; and that being, as we were, under the protection of the Pashah and his Excellency, nothing less than condign punishment on them would satisfy us, and in case this satisfaction was denied us here, we should appeal to the Pashah. The treasurer departed, promising we should hear from his master; but that not being the case, on the morning of our quitting Hillah, I wrote an account of the whole affair, and transmitted it by a special messenger to the Resident, Colonel Taylor, at Baghdad.

How different was the conduct of our Arab friend and host Rujub! his kindness and considerate attention were unwearied—he anticipated every want and provided every comfort. Dish after dish of good things did he send to tempt our appetites, and hovered about us with an anxious yet not officious zeal to promote our slightest wish; what we should have done without him, under all circumstances, I really do not know; and yet nothing

would he accept in the way of remuneration! Such disinterestedness deserves mention, if only for its rarity; for few Arabs indeed did we find resembling Rujub.

My servants arrived on the afternoon of the 29th, drenched to the skin, but glorying in the odour of sanctity they had acquired with the revered title of *Kerbelaee;* and so inflamed with their holy zeal was one of my grooms who had remained with me, or so alarmed at the prospect of the duty he had undertaken with me in a journey into Arabistan, that he insisted on taking leave, and setting off immediately to Kerbelah.

Our way lay right across the country, which was plashy with the late rain, but gave us an opportunity of seeing the process of preparing the ground for crop. It was primitively simple: they scratched the ground so lightly that the bushes of St. John's bread (*mimosa agrestis*) were scarcely disturbed, and then sowed the seed broadcast; yet such is the richness of the soil, that this strange culture produces magnificent crops. We had enough to do to clear the deep mud near the town, and not a little trouble in getting over sundry water-courses in our way. To save time on our march for the morrow, as the hour was still early, we rode at once to examine Al-Heimer, which was not more than a mile from our night's resting-place. It is a conical mound, as I have remarked, composed, as would appear, of furnace-burned bricks; but of a quality inferior to those of the Birs, so that they moulder faster by exposure to the weather. There is little

to attract attention in this mound except a certain white powder, which is found in layers between the bricks at unequal intervals of three, four, five, six, and seven courses, and which has puzzled the learned; some taking it for a species of cement in decomposition; others for layers of reeds, rotted by time and exposure; but, if the latter, why do they decay here more than in other places? While standing on the summit of this cone, I looked carefully towards the Birs and the Tueba for the continuous line of mounds which should have marked the site of the wall, had this, as some suppose, been the south-east angle of ancient Babylon; but nothing of the sort was to be seen, the mounds in view being, in fact, chiefly to the south and east of it, and thus must have been the remains of buildings *without* the line of the supposed wall.

The day had now become bitterly cold—a piercing wind blew along the plain, and we gladly retraced our steps to the camp, where, however, our reception was not calculated to comfort us. Our host, if host he might be called, who provided us with nothing —not even a shelter for the night—was a Fellah Arab of the Zobeid tribe, and a relative, as we were told, of Sheikh Waddee, who is at Baghdad. He received us with the most repulsive coldness, until he learned that there was a *doctor* among us, and then he brightened up, and came out with a whole catalogue of maladies and a most earnest request for medicines. This is a key on which every Oriental may be touched with ready effect. Medicine and medical advice *gratis* are so tempting that, if

they have not diseases in reality, they will feign complaints, and solicit remedies even for those which may by possibility hereafter afflict them.

The miserable hovels of this camp could literally not afford us shelter, so I pitched a little tent which, by way of precaution, I had brought—just large enough to hold our three little mattresses, or ourselves in a sitting posture upon them, and here we stowed ourselves, wrapped up in all the cloaks we could muster. Our hosts would neither give nor sell us anything, but by and by let us know that our wants might be supplied for a present; so we got some food and made the best of it. Our servants were worse off—they were all in ill humour from the bad roads and the bad start we had made, and their bad quarters did not mend matters; they had scarcely any shelter; and as the night cleared up to a hard frost with a bitter wind, the poor wretches were frozen to the very bone.

On the morning of the 31st the ground was as hard as iron and covered with hoar, and every puddle was a solid piece of ice. The sun rose like blood, and with a fierce wind that pierced us to the marrow—all the wrappings we had provided were insufficient to keep it out, and the people, with their benumbed fingers, could scarcely load the mules—this, too, in Mesopotamia, where in summer the heat is insupportable! It was seven o'clock ere we started; and long, long and tedious was the tramp we now had right across the desert—a true, bare, and joyless desert, void of all vestiges of man and nearly so of vegetation! The only variation to

the monotony of the scene was where we passed over a mound or the site of an ancient town or city, of which not less than four large ones, together with several canals, occurred in this day's march of about thirty-two miles. In fact, scarcely had we passed one, when another appeared; and it might be safely said, that we did not go over a square rood of the whole day's journey without seeing vestiges of former habitations, in fragments of brick, glass, and pottery. A great part of the ground was perfectly barren—much of it cracked so desperately as to make riding very unsafe. Where vegetation did exist, it only consisted of a few caper bushes, St. John's bread (*mimosa agrestis*), some salsuginous plants, or grass, of which we sometimes saw large tracts, that, having been overflowed, had shot up to a fine growth.

About three o'clock in the afternoon we were first greeted with the sight of a camel or two upon the horizon, generally the earliest and sure sign of approach to an Arab encampment; but this time it deceived us—they were the camels of the Jerboah Arabs, some of which had wandered down thus far in search of pasture. Early in the day, too, we saw smoke, which we believed to arise from the camp of the Zobeid, to which we were bound, and which gave us hopes of reaching our resting-place for the night early; but hour after hour passed on and never a bit the nearer did they appear. At length, towards evening, we fell in with more camels, and next a flock of sheep; so we thought all was right at last, and we held on for a weary time,

but still nothing was to be seen. At length, away darted our long stupid guide upon his lean gaunt mare, "like bolt from bowstring," to the top of a mound from which he expected to see the wished for camp; but still our lot was disappointment—there were only three or four miserable small tents which belonged to the same Jerboah Arabs, who had been driven below the line of Baghdad by the Aneiza, and whom you may remember we fell in with on the way to Hillah. It was, in fact, a small câmel-grazing farm, and these were shepherds, or rather camelherds, servants of persons who had lost the greater part of their all. From such persons there was little to be expected—not even water; for of that their camels require but little, and they themselves partake in some degree of the nature of their beasts: but they told us that the camp of the Zobeid was only an hour distant, so on we pushed again to a height from whence we were assured the tents might be seen. When we reached it, however, there was nought but the blank dreary desert, with the flare of a huge fire, still at a great distance — obviously arising from burning-grass. Our guide now took his part at once like a man of mettle, and, with a loud grunt meant for a "ya-ullah!" away he struck his course back towards the tents of the Jerboah shepherds, waving for us to follow; this we did, and about an hour after sunset reached the place.

We found them as poor as our worst anticipations could imagine: not a bit of bread nor a drop of water was to be had, and it was with the greatest

difficulty we could extract as much barley as would afford a few mouthfuls a-piece to our hungry horses. It was the stuff of which they made their own bread. In fact, I thought at first we should have had a fight for the liberty of even encamping; for, as we reached the miserable dwellings, a parcel of the roughest possible monsters rushed out, as it seemed, rather to knock us down than to welcome us, as every one carried a heavy club in his hand. As for bread, whether they had it or not, they would neither sell nor give it to us; it was a disgrace, they said, among Arabs, to sell bread: the corn we had to pay for at three times its value. They offered us a sheep at about ten times what it was worth; but there was no fuel to cook it with, and neither straw nor water was to be had at any price. As for ourselves, we had rice and a little meat reserved from the preceding day; but our servants must have fared ill enough without either food or shelter. A few bad dates, and perhaps a little camel's milk, bad and bitter enough, were all that they could possibly have had to eat. Such sulky ill-favoured rogues were our hosts, that I caused it to be intimated to our negro guide, that a requisition should be made for watchmen during the night. The reply was:—"Be content — everything is as safe as if it were in your own house;" and as a proof of the truth of this assertion, while one of our servants was bargaining with the people for the required watchman, one of them seized his girdle and ran off with it before his face.

The night passed, however, without further mo-

lestation, and indeed with less noise than is usual in an Arab camp. Our servants, having no tent, kept watch, three and three, all night long. Merry, light-hearted rascals are these Persians after all: as they sat round the embers of a fire scantily kept up with weeds, we heard them singing in chorus a sort of rhyme, which ran something like this, —"A strange place to travel in is Arabestan! —the horses can get neither straw nor grain—the servants neither meat nor drink—not even bread or water—a wonderful place is Arabestan!—a fine place is Arabestan!" and then they would all burst into loud fits of laughter; and thus did they welcome in a new year! It was, indeed, the last night of 1834, and our eyes on the morrow opened on the first of 1835—the second of these festive days which I have passed, since I left you, in toil and travel, on this various and anxious journey. * * * Cold, cold did it dawn upon our little tent, and cold the welcome it gave us on the wide plains of Chaldea, and among the wild Jerboah Bedooeens. The whole plain was white as snow with hoar-frost, and the blood-red sun arose in a cloudless orange sky, as we made our way towards the Tigris' banks, now, as we found within three hours of us; yet notwithstanding the hunger and cold, and the knowledge which our people had, that no relief from either could be had until we should reach the tents of the Zobeid, we were not *en route* till a quarter-past seven.

Our way lay first through a grass *hore*, or reedy marsh, now dry and sedgy; and after scrambling through this for two hours, we began to see strings

of camels rising in the distance. It soon became apparent that they were loaded, and in movement towards the right; and an Arab herd informed us that these were actually the camels of the Zobeid, who had changed their ground only the previous evening. This was unfortunate so far, that we should find the camp rather in confusion, and less in condition to afford us comfortable means of sustenance or accommodations; but the thing was to find it at all, and procure something for our starving horses and people. The welcome sight of three masts belonging to as many boats, served at once as a proof that the river was near, and a mark to lead us to it; a joyful matter for our thirsty horses, which we could scarcely prevent from plunging into the deep mud on the bank. An interminable string of camels now appeared on the right, loaded with the goods and chattels of the Zobeid; cutting this line, we held on towards an equally long line of smoke, which was pointed out as the place where the tents were in the act of being pitched; but do not imagine that these fires were in the act of boiling the flesh-pots to fill our empty stomachs—with the new year had commenced the new moon, and with it the Ramazân or Mahomedan *Lent*, and all were fasting.

It was a picturesque thing to see the whole horizon covered with camels, which looked like moving trees in the mirage; but a still more picturesque sight awaited us when, turning a piece of lofty reeds, we came at once upon a large *hore* in a blaze, the grass presenting a burning line of vivid flame of

more than three miles long. This was the fire we had seen the evening before, and which had slumbered in the heavy dew till called into fiercer action by the breath of morning. The Arabs have a custom of burning the dry grass of the marshes that a new and sweet growth may come up for their cattle in the proper season; and thus we had the magnificent spectacle of a whole country in flames. As we rode along the edge of the conflagration and over the smoking ground, it was splendid to see the forky tongues of flame licking up the sere herbage and springing into the air in most fantastic shapes—tossing whole sheets of fiery vapour to the sky; it looked like a mighty army, vomiting forth volumes of smoke and flame. We had to coquet a little with this conflagration, rather more closely than was comfortable, as the path led through the heart of a great half-burned patch. The fire roused a good deal of game which was couched in the long grass. A large antelope started up under the feet of our guide's horse, and it was striking to remark the effect of this incident upon his habitual phlegm: at once the automaton started into life; and putting his scarecrow mare into motion, set off in chase, brandishing his spear; and so embarrassed was the antelope in the long matted grass where the taller animal had an advantage, that there appeared every chance of his spearing it, for it turned several times, and always towards the thick grass. Unfortunately, a little wretch of an Arab boy started up unexpectedly, and gave the animal a wrong turn, so that it got into a thinner spot, and thence into the open

plain, where it escaped; but it was a spirited little burst. Our black leader was more fortunate in another, and, as some might have supposed, a less easy chase; a black partridge (or Francolin) rose, and after a short flight alighted. Away, as formerly, darted the guide, spear in hand and his mare tail on end, roused the bird again and chased it into a little thicket. After it he dashed once more; saw the poor frightened and then wearied bird cowering under a bush, and speared it as it lay; then jumping from his horse, twisted its wings together in a most savage manner behind its back, and thus presented it to me. This happened almost in the camp, where we arrived at noon, having, besides our adventures with fire and water, passed over several ancient sites by the way: in a few minutes after noon we were in the Sheikh's tent.

Our welcome, however, was not, as it appeared, of the warmest, considering the fame of Arab hospitality. The Ramazân, in fact, is a miserably uncomfortable time for travelling or for visiting. The people fast strictly all day and sit up all night to eat; thus clothing a necessarily wearisome season in a still more forbidding dress. Fasting themselves, they dream not that others may require to feed; so when we came to inquire into the chances of obtaining food, we discovered that the Sheikh was asleep, and consequently nothing was to be had.

So far as actual craving of appetite was concerned, we satisfied it with a few remaining dates and a morsel of bread, washed down with a cup of good tea, and our servants got some pickings of the same

stop-gap kind. We then conversed for a while with a very gentlemanly Koord, a guest of the Sheikh (who, I suspect, was in *hiding*), until that chief made his appearance in person. This occurred not till about half an hour before sunset. His worship issued forth from a huge black tent at a little distance from ours, in which he took up rather a low seat. The manners of this man, as well as of his elder brother, Sheikh Waddee, were remarkably passive and quiet—a peculiarity observable, I believe, in most tolerably civilized Arab chiefs, when not excited into action by some powerful cause. Neither in his reception of us, nor in the welcome he gave us, or his subsequent conversation, was his demeanour expressive of animation or frankness; and judging of it by other and similar occasions, I should deem it cool. His curiosity to see the various rarities he heard I possessed was keen enough; he called for my pistols, gun, and spying-glass, and was delighted with my Lucifer and Promethean matches. A four-barrelled pistol belonging to Mr. Finlay, tickled his facy hugely; and when the way to fire it was shown him, nothing would satisfy him but to discharge the whole four himself. One of our people, Seyed Hindee, informed him, that I with my gun could kill birds upon the wing, and did so as often as they rose. The Sheikh expressed a great desire to witness this feat, and I looked about for a bird to sacrifice to his curiosity; none, however, making its appearance, I told Seyed Hindee to throw up a piece of brick to fire at, and fortunately struck it in the air so hard that it flew in pieces. It was a lucky

hit, and had a very wholesome effect in impressing the Arabs with a high opinion of the power of our arms and means of defence. The Sheikh himself was quite delighted, and, surprised out of his demureness, seized me by the hand and cried :—"Come, come, you 're a good fellow ; you had better become a Mussulman and live with me." — "How can that be, Sheikh," said I, "when I have left a wife and family and all my friends and relatives at home ?"— "Oh, give these up," replied he : "only turn Mussulman, and I will give you all those and more, here." On my again excusing myself, he turned to those around him with an air of compassion, and said :—"What a pity, now, that these poor fellows must go to *jehannum* (hell)! are you not afraid of your soul?—will you not think of saving it?" I replied that my belief on that subject was, that whoever lived well, according to the faith he professed and the dictates of his own conscience, would be regarded by the Almighty Creator with favour, and find mercy and reward hereafter. To this he made no immediate reply ; but a little afterwards, observing me rubbing my hands from cold, he said :—"See now, you can scarcely bear this little cold to-day—how will you bear the pains of hell to-morrow ?" I smiled, and, resolved to enter into no religious controversy, especially with a bigot whose language I did not understand, I dropped the subject. The sun just then going down, the Sheikh somewhat hastily took leave, taking with him the Koordish gentleman, who had on this occasion acted as my interpreter. They went to enjoy

a most excellent and plentiful meal in the Sheikh's tent, sweetened by a previous fast of eleven hours, and one in which we would willingly have joined; but the good Sheikh would seem to have fancied either that Christians had no appetites, or that they would not eat with Mahomedans; for he expressed himself somewhat surprised when he heard we would eat things even killed by them.

People may talk of Canada, or Siberia, or Iceland, for cold; but I must say that I have seldom suffered more from low temperature, than for these few days past on the plains of Mesopotamia, and particularly during last night in our tent. Five tedious hours it deprived me of sleep; I could not warm my bed, my feet and knees were numbed to insensible lumps, and during the whole night I felt the wind piercing through all the coverings I could muster, into my very bones. In the morning, the water-proof cloak which was thrown over the bed was frozen stiff from the congealed steam of my body, and the water in the *matarâs*, or leathern bottles, and the *nargeels*, or water-pipes, was frozen into solid lumps!—so much for Chaldea in January. As for Arab hospitality and courtesy to guests—"Oh, breathe not its name; let it sleep in the shades!" into which it appears, in these degenerate days, to have retired; and let those who value their comfort stay at home during the Arab Ramazân. When we awoke this morning, there was neither wood nor fire, nor meat nor bread, nor even water, to be had; and when, after a powerful effort to extort them, they were promised—each article was produced so slowly,

and with such long intervals between, that they were jointly and severally almost useless for the purposes for which they were required. It was ten o'clock before we could get a cup of coffee, and one in the afternoon ere breakfast could be achieved. Most of this time was passed in bed, from sheer inability to maintain any reasonable heat otherwise; for there was no fire, and the searching north wind still pierced through and through our slender coverings, in defiance of the bright sun overhead.

After breakfast we rode out about an hour's distance from the camp to examine a group of mounds called by the Arabs *Iskhurriah*, or "the Stony," from their being covered over with multitudes of dark-coloured stones of a singular texture. The Arabs have it on tradition, that this was the country of Lot (or *Loot*, as they call him), and that these stones were rained from heaven by the Almighty in wrath, to destroy the wicked inhabitants of the place. There, indeed, we found the stones in abundance, sufficient to have destroyed any city, and covering a number of mounds, varying from fifteen to thirty-five feet in height, and extending in various directions for more than a mile, besides sprinkling the plain for a considerable distance beyond them. They were all of a black and heavy, though porous, nature, mingled with olive and sulphur-coloured scoriæ and vitrified matter, and are probably the remains of some immense brick and pottery manufacture of the times of old. I never myself saw the Staffordshire manufactories, but one of the party who had, observed that he had seen

even larger mounds of such scoriæ there. The large size of some of the black stones is puzzling. Millstones are fabricated from them, and I suspect that they formed a particular species of manufacture in themselves; they were seen in blocks of from four to five feet long, and six to ten inches thick. It is certainly a curious place, and must have been situated in a populous district; for on looking around from the top of the highest of these stone-covered mounds, we could scarcely see any part of the horizon unmarked with others of greater or less size; sites, probably, of cities or towns, and villages, which were built from the produce of, or were customers to this great manufactory.

We returned to camp just as the Sheikh himself came in from an unsuccessful hunting party; and soon after, the sun having set, accompanied him to his tent, where, his worship having discovered that we had no objection to mess with Mussulmans, we were invited to share his evening's repast, and accordingly did partake of a truly partriarchal and primitive feast. I wish I could do justice to the scene in description—you must assist the attempt with your imagination. The tent of this Arab Sheikh was of dark brown hair-cloth, some fifty or sixty feet long, supported in the centre by a row of poles, none of them more than nine feet high; thus limiting the extreme height to that pitch, while the side to windward was pinned down by ropes to within three feet of the ground, producing a sharp pent; the opening being closed by a wall or screen of the same material, which, though thin and pervious

to light, formed a tolerable protection against the wind. The other, or leeward side, was open in all its extent; the outer extremity, which should, like the other, have been pinned down to the ground, being elevated by poles of about six feet in height, the ropes being proportionally relaxed. The space thus covered over head might be from sixteen to twenty feet broad, by the length already stated; though, if closed, it would not have exceeded twelve or fourteen. It contained neither goods nor furniture, save towards the upper end, where there were some pillows and a few carpets disposed for seats, and where the chief received visiters in form. The rest could boast of no other carpet than the tufts of grass that chanced to be on the ground when the tent was pitched. Near the lower end was a fireplace on the ground, marked only by the ashes of successive fires. At this time there was a huge blaze flaring in the faces of as wild a set of savages as ever surrounded a cannibals' feast; and who, to the number of twenty or thirty, were seated on their heels, most of them with shirts and abbas tucked up, to permit their long breechless limbs to rejoice in the general heat. They fed the flame from a great heap of brushwood behind them, which occupied the extreme bottom and part of the side of the tent—it was a very Robinson Crusoe-like spectacle indeed.

The chief, and my friend the Koord, received us standing; but so soon as a rag of carpet had been thrown down for our convenience at one point of the circle, we took our seats according to orders, and they also assumed the "*Dance Kirkuddy*" atti-

tude of the rest; holding up their hands before their faces to defend them from the scorching heat which was so agreeable to the lower extremities. It was indeed so intense, as sometimes to force us to draw back, and get a ragged Arab between us and its blaze. The chief saw this; and remembering the success of his attack on me the previous day, recommenced his well-bred religious admonitions with the observation, "Ay, ay, you wince under this, but this is nothing to the heat of *hell*, which you will feel to-morrow." None of us would take up the gauntlet thus thrown down, as we feared disturbing the present harmony; and, indeed, I was glad to be allowed to gaze uninterruptedly on the singular scene around me.

I think I never saw anything so perfectly savage on so large a scale. The Koords are perfect gentlemen in appearance to the Arabs. Even the Toorkomans stood in advantageous contrast with these ragged and wild children of the desert. The greater number were but half clothed. I do not believe there were three pair of trousers in the whole party; a shirt or an abba was the full dress of most, with a headkerchief that could boast of no particular colour; and the Arab eye, always wild and bright, though fine, gleamed with scintillating fierceness in the blaze, from amongst their long black elf-locks beneath their contracted brows; and a stranger, judging from their looks and gestures, and from the loud tones of their voices when they spoke, would have imagined they were just about to use their weapons —sword or dagger, or large clubbed stick, which

every one held in his hand or in his lap, or which lay beside him on the floor.

I had not much time to dwell upon the ever-varying aspect of the group, for the *cawachee,* or coffee preparer (a sort of very dishevelled butler) of the great man, now stepped forward; and first sitting down in the circle and warming his hands like the rest, began to pour out from two ample brass vessels near the fire, a sort of liquor, with which it seems these Ramazân ascetics break their fast, and which is generally presented also to guests. It was a composition of hot-water and sugar flavoured with a little ginger and spice. Of this, a small cup not bigger than a dram-glass, was handed to each, and then the signal was given that dinner was ready, so we all went to the other end of the tent where it was laid out. Assist me, ye powers, to describe it!

In the centre of the space just in front of the cushions (dirty and greasy they were) which was covered for the occasion with coarse canvass grain-bags, I believe, by way of tablecloth, there was raised a sort of platform of wood some six feet in diameter, and on this, in an immense copper dish, smoked between two and three hundred pounds' weight of rice. Around this grand centrepiece were ranged smaller platters, filled with various preparations of meat (mutton) and pastry. The former was boiled and stewed, and dressed up in forced-meat, with plums and raisins and other good things; the latter was in still more numerous shapes, and, though rather greasy, all exceedingly good. Most of the dishes, indeed, were swimming in melted but-

ter and rich sauces, and the whole exhibited a truly chief-like profusion. Around this hecatomb-looking feast sat down about thirty of the savages before described, with their long, coal-black, platted and disordered locks hanging over the dishes; and behind these stood or sat a still more extensive outer circle of expectants; for it seems that the order of the day is, that when any one has filled his maw, he rises and gives place to another; and thus the succession proceeds until the whole party, often amounting to hundreds, has been fed, or that the viands are exhausted.

In this primitive assembly did we take our places, which were assigned to us at the cushions, the Sheikh sitting below us, but still eating with us. It is not customary for the host to sit down with his stranger guests; but as the house and feast were in point of fact Sheikh Waddee's, as head of the tribe, the brother who, though acting the part was virtually not our host, broke through no established rule by thus sitting down with us. It would have done your heart good to have witnessed the vigorous *set-to* that was made by one and all, the moment the "Bismillah" was uttered. In a second, every hand was plunged arm-deep into the caldron of rice, and each man vied with his neighbour in the size of the balls he made of it, mingled with the grease and sauce of the stews, and the dexterity and rapidity with which he stuffed them into his throat; where, down they went, whatever their magnitude, fast as ever schoolboy bolted stolen gooseberries.

Our Koordish friend, who sat near us, pointed out

what he considered the nicest dishes, and really, greasy though they were, I found them capital. Instead of applying to your Abernethys and your Jepthsons, and other stomach doctors, I recommend all gentlemen with poor appetites and weak digestive powers to take a trip into these countries, and if heartburns, and aches, and ails are not soon cured, I am no prophet: the weakest of them would eat a live sheep and thrive on a draught of melted rancid butter before two months were over. The Sheikh, though he did not forget his own share in the feast, was by no means neglectful of his guests. He took large lumps of the meat and pastry, and threw them down before us on different parts of the superficies of the rice-mountain, which now exhibited sundry great ravines and hollows in its sides, from the rapid and sustained attacks of its assailants, and poured whole dishes of sauce and melted ghee over it to increase its savouriness. The burst was too earnest to endure long. Anon, we observed several members of the circle rise, and quit the repast with apparent reluctance and difficulty; but the *hiatus* was so speedily filled up as to cause no perceptible intermission in the assault, and the circle was always complete. I found it was understood that when any one of the guests had enough, or had employed a reasonable time in the business of repletion, he should rise and make room for another; and those who thus retired, washing their hands, sat down by the fire at the other end of the tent. To some it was a sore duty to withdraw from the good

fare: your Arab, like most savages, has a wonderfully accommodating stomach—he can go for days upon a handful of dates; or, if these are not to be had, he will do without anything till food casts up; but when it does come in plenty, Sir Dougald Dalgetty was nothing to him in the way of stowing in *provende* —he will devour as much as eight or ten moderate men: nothing surprised our Arab guides more than the small quantity of food which we consumed. I am not myself, you know, a despicable hand at the knife and fork, nor were my companions, to do them justice, greatly behind me; but when the Arabs saw the plate of pillaw and stew usually served up for our dinner, they used to declare it was not half allowance for *one man!* The drink provided to wash down this solid feast was a sort of sherbet, made of sugar and water acidulated, and very agreeable; and it appeared to be as abundant as the eatables.

When we had sufficiently amused ourselves with this strange and characteristic scene, and satisfied our own more moderate appetites, we rose, washed our hands, and retired to the withdrawing-room—to wit, the fire at the other end, around which there had already congregated a circle of our primitive friends, and where we were soon joined by the Sheikh himself. By this time the cawachee had resumed his seat at the fire-side, having before him a row of at least eight large coffee-pots, from which we were soon served with small cups of that beverage, and the dose was repeated every ten minutes while we remained. This cawachee was a miserable scarecrow, with a face like a reaping-hook, a

ragged shirt and gown, with head-gear of unspeakable squalidity; and his coffee, which was excellent and well flavoured with cardamoms, was handed about by bare-legged Ganymedes, in canvass shirts of nearly a similar colour. As the chief guests, we were served first, and afterwards the whole party indiscriminately, the cawachee helping himself and his ragamuffin cup-bearers as regularly as the rest. During the whole business there was an incessant gabble of tongues, *à l'Arabe*, and the humour of the scene was heightened by the settlement of a matter of business, which the Sheikh had to arrange in the course of the evening.

It appeared that among the guests were two or three Arabs of another tribe called Baeej, who had in some way or other rendered themselves obnoxious to government, and the Pashah had directed the Zobeid to reduce them to order, a duty which was readily undertaken. In the discharge of it the Sheikh of the Baeej, it appears, was killed and a favourite mare captured. The first injury might have been got over; but the latter was an unpardonable offence against property, which restitution alone could atone for; and the persons in question had been deputed to negotiate this knotty point. They shared the feast and were honourably treated; but, if we were to judge by the violence of action, and loudness of tongue, with which the succeeding negotiation was carried on, it did not appear to be of a satisfactory nature. In fact, I afterwards understood that it failed altogether, and that the threatened vengeance of the injured tribe, had been

treated by our hosts with scorn and defiance. I learned too, that the scene I had witnessed here this night, so far from being uncommon, was one of every day occurrence. When the Sheikh is alone, the regular consumption at his table is from two to three sheep a day, and three *wuzuns* (about three hundred pounds) of rice, with other things in proportion, such as butter, sugar, &c. When he has company, the consumption increases to eight, ten, or fifteen sheep, and a proportionate quantity of other eatables. A certain worthy already spoken of, by the name of Sulymaun Gunnum, was his guest some time ago; and during his stay, which continued for months, the expenditure of barley for his horses amounted to a toghâr, equal to two hundred and forty Tabreez mauns, or near a ton a-day, worth here about five pounds sterling!

LETTER IV.

The Guide Nuisance. — Desert Ride and Bivouac. — An Alarm. — Display of Arab Courage. — A more dangerous Incident, and Providential Escape.—Second Bivouac.—Short Commons. — Friendly Meeting. — Manœuvre. — Reluctant Hospitality. —Arab Honesty. — Threatening of a "Row." — The Ben-i-Rikâb.—More Attempts at Thieving.—Primitive Husbandry. —Mâdan Arabs—their Character and Abodes. — More ancient Sites. — Serious Obstacle. — Mode of crossing a deep Creek.—Another Night with the Mâdans.—Crossing the Euphrates.—Um-Ghyer, a curious Ruin.—First Montefic Camp.—Origin and present Condition of the Montefic.—First View of the Montefic Camp.—The Sheikh absent—his Employment.

DEAR ——,

AT intervals during the feast, described in my last letter, it had been settled that we should resume our journey on the morrow; but the various preparations and arrangements were not concluded until half past nine A.M. when we took leave of the camp. These arrangements were not effected without difficulty; and, in fact, I found among the Arabs much of the same annoyance I had met with in Persia. They would not sell us anything in the shape of corn or bread, nor could we wring from them enough for our wants as guests, so we found it necessary to coquet about it, and send a fellow to

purchase secretly at twice the real price, or agree to take it as a gift, presenting the giver with twice its value in return. As to guides, no confidence can be placed in any promises that may be made for furnishing them; for while any doubts are entertained respecting the chance of payment, those who are equal to the task are apt to keep back; and when, at length, it is understood that the employment is likely to be profitable, it becomes the object of a job, and numbers, all equally ill-qualified, press forward to obtain a slice of the cake. It was signified to us that two men were appointed by the Sheikh to take us to *Sook-u-Shiookh;* but I found they expected me to mount them. When they found that would not do, they declared that all they could muster was a young camel, instead of two horses; and, after infinite trouble and worry, four men presented themselves, three being mounted on horses and one on a camel. Against this strange attendance I protested, and refused to move until the Sheikh's man or men should come forward and prove his title. This produced such a quarrel among them, that I thought it would have ended in all leaving me; but the thing righted itself after a few minutes of storm and fury, and we all proceeded on our way good friends.

Our way lay over a desert sprinkled with St. John's bread, camel's thorn, &c. till four o'clock, without seeing a soul; when observing no symptoms of tents or Arabs, and finding a pool containing a little standing water, we came to, among some tamarisk-bushes and encamped for the night. I

believe I have mentioned my having provided a little tent, quite a diminutive concern; it was now a great comfort: for the night set in with hard frost, and the water was soon turned into ice; but our little tent kept us snug, and we slept soundly in the wilderness, after a good dinner furnished from the materials we had brought with us. The servants were exposed to the whole rigour of the wind, which was very biting; and the horses had no other sustenance than their feed of corn after their march; but there was no help for it. Our direction during the day was pretty nearly on a line S.S.E.

Among other desert herbs, to-day we again met with the Colocynth, or bitter apple, in such plenty as sometimes to cover the ground. To a stranger it appears so like a fine ripe orange, that I am told some have been so much deceived as to dismount and taste it, an experiment which I engage they will never repeat. We also passed several sites, and a large canal or two, almost obliterated: one of the sites was by the Arabs called *Aweineh*, and another *Okuhther*.

This morning (January 4th) was so bitterly cold, that there was no getting the people into motion till late. It was a quarter past seven before we left our ground: as the sun rose and the wind was on our backs, we got into warmth by degrees, and should have enjoyed our ride had there been anything to see; but the scanty sprinkling of bushes which accompanied us yesterday, decreased to-day to a single tuft here and there, at long in-

tervals, leaving the earth absolutely bare between, and often rent into deep cracks, which gaped under our feet. This barrenness arose from no poverty in the soil, but from the circumstance of its being frequently overflowed with water, and at other times baked with heat, so that any seed that happened to fall upon it, was probably destroyed before it could take root.

About two hours after starting, we had a very amusing alarm, and were treated with a fair specimen of Arab courage. Our party had been increased by four men on foot, who would all have made it out that they belonged to the guide department, till I reduced them to their proper denomination—that of fellows desirous of profiting by the protection afforded by our party. Some of these persons had hung behind; and on climbing a mound on the wayside, to look for them, we became aware of a party of mounted men, far on our left, which threw our friends into some confusion. In order, partly, to allow our party to close up, and partly to inquire who the strangers might be, we halted, while one of our guides pricked forth at speed towards them. Our glasses had already shown them to consist of some twelve or fourteen men on camels, and others on foot, being armed with three spears and some guns; and when our reconnoiter quitted us, they were about a mile and a half off. We saw him join the strangers, and then separate from them, returning towards us, while they rode on their way. By this time our lingerers had come up; and as the other party were moving off, obviously

without any desire for a rencounter, our heroes, both Persian and Arab, thought this their opportunity for exhibiting most vehement valour. They swore that the strangers were no better than the dust under their feet, and that they would drive them like that before the wind. When our messenger joined us, and all, as I thought, had expired in that flash of heroism, I was surprised by seeing the guide who had remained with us, fall into a most desperate taking. He flung his abba and headkerchief upon the ground, and stamped about with wild grimaces, while tucking up the long sleeves of his shirt to his shoulders, leaving the arms all bare, and uttering strange and inarticulate sounds. Something was obviously wrong, but so great was the ferment that it was not without some difficulty I could get at the fact. It appeared, at length, that the people whom we still saw, were of the Shummur, or rather Jerboah tribe, coming from Heaven knows where, and who were, he said, his enemies. They had robbed him, murdered his people, and I know not what besides, so he swore he must go after them and put them all to death. And then he went on girding up his loins, examining his matchlock and ammunition-pouches, taking from one of them a parcel of bullets which he tossed into his mouth, to be handy for prompt service, and uttering the while most desperate threats, to which his comrade responded, though, as it seemed to me, with far less vehemence and front of resolution.

On inquiring of our Arab friend, Seyed Hindee,

what might be the meaning of all this folly, that worthy only shrugged his shoulders, and treated the bravado with contempt, as it deserved; but as it was occasioning very useless and injurious delay, I took the liberty of interfering, and made the interpreter signify to the guides that if this was the mode in which they meant to perform their duty to us, I must return to their Sheikh and inform him of their conduct. This, with a suitable display of displeasure, had the desired effect; our guide dismounted from his war hobby, untucked his sleeves, resumed his head-gear and abba, and began to account for, and excuse his conduct, by a long detail of the causes of his enmity against these Shummurs.

Now the fact is, as you may have suspected, that he never had the slightest idea of meddling with them at all. It was but a flourish got up to impress us with a formidable idea of his courage. Had the strangers indicated any disposition to attack us, he, probably like other boasters, would have been the first to turn tail. This incident led to a conversation between the Arabs, which was reported to me by my interpreter, and which shows the importance of assuming an appearance of strength, and permitting it to be seen that one carries the means of defence. They were discussing the chances of success in case we had come to blows with the strangers, and the valiant one was insisting on it that we should have assuredly prevailed. "Not a doubt of it," said he; "we should have plundered them to a certainty, and carried off all their property. *They* (indicating us with a sign)

would have put them every one to death." "How do you know that?" demanded the other. "Why, who were they, the dogs, to stand before *them*," was the rejoinder: "did you ever know people armed in such a manner? did you ever see such an *atish-khaneh*? (literally *fire-house*,* establishment of fire-arms); one of them has a pistol with four barrels; the other, two double-barrelled ones, and a double-barrelled gun that never misses; he would have shot every man of them, as he shot the wild duck yesterday" (I had been lucky enough to astonish them by bringing down a wild duck on wing). "Do you think he would ever have ventured to be so angry with me if he did not know his own strength?" The other acquiesced, and the conversation went no further; but I remembered that just when, at one time, there seemed to be some chance of the two parties coming into collision, this same guide had told me to spare no one, to put a ball through every one of the fellows: it was a wholesome feeling of respect, which we certainly saw no good cause to diminish.

This incident places the character of Arab courage in these parts in its true light, "Ex uno disce omnes," they are all alike, braggadocios, and generally cowards. I by no means would be meant to assert that the Arab will on no occasion put his person in jeopardy; far from it. When his blood is well up, he cares as little for danger, and will risk life as freely as any one; but in ordinary cases he is neither very forward to spill his own blood, nor that of his enemy. He has nothing of that

calm, sustained, effective courage which animates the regularly trained soldier of Europe, or which we find, modified, perhaps, by constitution and national character, but still strikingly illustrated in the conduct of our disciplined troops of India. The slightest loss disheartens him, and the smallest show of resolute opposition drives him back. Arabs are only formidable when in overwhelming numbers, or when driven to despair, like the stag at bay. The fact is, that the Arab, though sufficiently fiery and quarrelsome, is restrained from shedding the blood of his countrymen (as I have already observed) by a dread of the consequences. No one likes to involve his family or tribe in all the inconveniences of a blood-feud, nor probably would he find support from them without sufficient cause. Thus, even in the most lawless states of society, we find checks, originally created by necessity and subsequently established by common consent, as cogent on its members, if not as perfect in principle as the more formal enactments of civilized nations, an irrefragable proof of the necessity of these legal restraints upon human will and passions.

Dr. Ross and myself had an adventure of a different sort, towards the close of this day, and one that had well nigh terminated tragically for us both. The horses of ourselves and servants had become maddened by the presence of the mares ridden by our Arab guides, and like young bucks of the human race were ready to quarrel with each other for the favours of ladies who cared not a whit about them. Among the rest the Doctor's horse, and that which

I rode this day, thought fit to take offence at one another; and on coming rather carelessly near the former, notwithstanding his repeated warning, shrieks, and snorts, he made a sudden snatch with his teeth at my thigh, but caught hold of my abba and trousers only. I jerked my horse round just at the very moment when the Doctor pulled his the same way, so that the head of mine was brought close to the other's flank; and he returned the compliment by seizing the Doctor by the leg, with so much violence, as to pull him from his seat. The animal, thus freed from restraint, rushed teeth and hoofs at mine, pawing with so much fury that had I received one of the blows aimed at me it would have been enough, while my steed returned the attack with interest, in spite of all I could do. In my efforts to pull him round, and so to get free, the bridle broke; and seeing myself now powerless, I took the opportunity of his rearing to slip off behind, hoping to roll clear of all: but somehow or other I got right among his hind feet, and there lay the Doctor and I sprawling under the two pawing, and rearing, and biting brutes, as pretty a group for a battle-piece as a sculptor could desire to have. In a moment or two, however, not re-regarding us, off they set after the mares, but grappling with each other on the way, down they fell together, and were caught and secured by the grooms.

In the mean time I rose from the ground, astonished to find myself unhurt, and looking round, observed the Doctor also rising, and limping, as it

appeared, with pain. I feared he must be dreadfully injured, for I could have sworn to at least half a dozen horse tramps on his body: but he also had most providentially escaped with comparatively little hurt. The teeth of my horse had caught and torn through abba, and gown, and riding breeches, and drawers; but stopped short of the skin. One of their hoofs, however, had struck him on the hand and head, severely bruising one finger, and giving the latter a slanting blow, which, had it not been well defended by his Arab headgear, might have been very serious: but the Fez and headkerchief, &c. defended him well; and although some pain and confusion were felt for a day, the accident produced no further ill consequence than that of disabling the right hand for a week. Still we could not exclude a passing reflection on what our situation would have been in this wide desert, far removed from help, without even a drop of water, had one of us received some serious injury, or had a leg or an arm been broken in the fray; but a traveller should not, any more than a soldier, think of or anticipate such casualties, further than as he considers them inseparable from his calling; all he has to do is, to place his trust in that Providence who protects those who call on Him in sincerity and truth, and not to tempt danger wantonly. So we mounted our pugnacious steeds again, and proceeded on our way, taking special care, however, to keep them, for the future, at a respectful distance.

For some time previous to this accident, we had

entered upon a tract totally devoid of herbage, having only here and there, at long intervals, a tamarisk, or a caper-bush, or a bunch of the soda-plant, and being cut up by deep ruts, like canals, made by the subsiding waters of the annual spring overflow, or the occasional rains of winter. On our left we saw smoke, probably rising from Arab tents, but very distant and quite out of our way. Our guides told us there were Arabs ahead also, but we saw no signs of them. The day was drawing to a close, and a short time before sunset we reached some puddles of water left by the rains; so a council was called, and we came to the resolution that it was better for the horses that they should fast for the night even after a day's severe work, than that they should be urged further on at an uncertainty, perhaps to miss the camps, and then be forced to bivouac under still less favourable circumstances and in darkness. There was a little bit of grass, too, which would afford our mules a bite, the horses we did not dare to turn loose from the certainty of their fighting; so we took up our quarters under the lee of a small tuft of tamarisk bushes, and picketted our beasts. The aforesaid puddles secured us against thirst, but to provide against the assaults of hunger was not an easy matter. We could not muster above two handfuls of rice with a few dates, and our party amounted to seventeen, besides interlopers. For ourselves, I got up a mess of portable soup, thickened with a handful of rice, and plenty of onions and seasoning, which, with a good dish of tea, sent us not ill off to our beds.

The servants had fifteen dates a-piece, and a small bag of flour, which had been put up at Baghdad for the cook's use, was brewed into a sort of pottage which gave their stomachs something to do. As for the Arabs, to fast is no unusual thing with them; they feed like famished wolves when they have food, but can endure a day or two's fast as well as any North American savage. The horses were worst off; but Dr. Ross's servant had fortunately taken the precaution to put up two instead of one day's feed for his beasts, and this was doled out into just two handsfuls for each animal, which had to chew the cud upon it till morning. There was some talk of *lions* coming from the bed of the Hye river, or canal, from which we could not be far distant, and they might have a mind to taste some of our horse-flesh; but we treated this lightly, and one of the guides observed to his companion, "Talk of lions to people who can bring a bird on wing down with a ball! What are they likely to care about wild beasts?" Good simple souls! they little knew that the feat was performed with small shot! No lions came, however; we laid ourselves down to rest, confiding in that protection which had preserved us in real perils, and passed the night in safety and in peace.

The march of this day produced little to claim our attention. In the morning we passed some sites, and the ground, as on former marches, was everywhere strewed with relics, brick, pottery, or glass, which declared it to have at one time been inhabited; but as we advanced to the southward, and

approached the tract of land, annually overflowed by the Hye and other rivers, these vestiges diminished in frequency, and at length wholly disappeared; all solid and heavy substances sink, no doubt, in the mud produced by the inundations.

Our situation was in nowise so agreeable as to tempt either ourselves or our people to morning indolence. Hungry as they were, our servants were obliged to keep watch by turns, and sleep was indeed rendered almost impossible from the bitter, bitter cold. How often did we hug ourselves at the chance, for it was rather that than actual foresight, which had led us to provide the dear little tent which now proved so great a comfort. Thin and slight as it was, and not above six feet by nine, and five feet high, while the light was burning in it, and our dinner smoking on the carpet, it served in some degree to insulate us from the cold air, and keep us lapt in a little atmosphere of our own. But no sooner had we laid ourselves down—and there was just room for each of us Tchelebees to do so—than the cold penetrated through every covering we could muster, and we scarcely dared to turn, because in so doing we came in contact with the chilled garments around us. In the morning, therefore, as soon as dawn appeared, we rose and loaded. The tent resembled a little hill of snow from the hoar frost which covered it, and a withering hard wind chilled our very marrow.

We now found out, or rather guessed, that our course had been too far to the eastward; so we took first a S.S.W., and then a southerly

course, in order to clear the northward bulge of the Hye. About nine o'clock, A. M. we descried camels and men at some distance. They ran away at our approach—they, not we, were the frightened party this time; but as we sought not to create dread, and on the contrary wanted assistance, their panic was inconvenient. So we detached one of our horsemen to satisfy them of our pacific intentions and bring them to speaking terms. In the mean time, three horsemen more, armed with spears, appeared upon our right; and after flourishing about for a while, came forward at full gallop. Another of our Arabs dashed forward to meet them: down went the butt-ends of their spears on the ground; and after a few seconds' converse, we had the satisfaction of seeing the leader and our man lean forward and embrace as they sat on horseback. All fear of assault was thus at an end, and our hopes of a hospitable reception were warranted by the welcome which they gave us as they advanced and joined our party.

These hopes, however, were rather fallacious. The horsemen, indeed, rode along with us towards some tents, which now appeared in the distance; but we found a sort of natural canal running between them and us, filled partially with mud and water, and they told us that the occupiers of them were only poor devils unable to entertain us, adding an offer to take us forward to the tents of the larger and richer members of the tribe. This, it appeared, was but an artifice to inveigle us away from their own homes; for, one after another, they slunk away as we ad-

vanced, till we found ourselves alone with our guides. In the mean time, we saw the country beyond the water course, quite studded with black tents and cattle, while on our side not one appeared. The water, too, had increased to such a depth as to be fordable only with difficulty; so, seeing ourselves fairly cheated by those who had met us first, we called a halt opposite to the largest group of tents in sight, and resolved to send one of our guides across to negotiate for our reception.

It was obvious that doubts or dread were entertained respecting us — perhaps our party was too formidable in numbers to be received by any single division of the tribe; so our guide had directions to assure them not only of our good intentions, but of our ability and will to remunerate our entertainers either by actual purchase of necessaries, or by a present equivalent to what we might consume. To sell food to the traveller is quite against the laws of Arab hospitality; but an enterchange of presents is admissible. So, after a considerable length of negotiation, arising more, I fear, from mistrust than delicacy, the scruples of Arab etiquette, and Arab avarice were got over, and we passed the canal, which was here breast deep for the horses, and twenty-five or thirty yards across. Our baggage cattle, however, had to retrace their steps for nearly two miles, in order to reach a ford practicable for them. So much again for Arab hospitality and fidelity of guidance.

We now got barley for our poor horses; and in less than an hour a plentiful supply of hot bread

and dates strewed with melted butter, was set before ourselves and servants — for the Arabs make no difference between master and man. All sat down to the same repast—a solecism in the eyes of my Persians which they could not at all get over. After a rest of two hours, we resumed our march ; but just at starting, discovered that a gun belonging to one of my servants was missing. The whole of our arms had been piled in a heap behind the place where we were sitting. I had seen them altogether myself, so that there was no doubt of the theft; but the people of the tent all denied it with strong asseverations, and an air of deep indignation at the affront of supposing they could be guilty of such a breach of hospitality. Our servants, however, persisted in the charge, and our guides, whose duty it was to protect our property, interfered with a high hand, declaring that we were persons proceeding in charge of presents to the Sheikh of the Montefic (whose *Rayahs* or tributaries these Arabs were), and that he would exact severe retribution for any loss we might sustain at their hand. Still they were obstinate. They protested — the guides grew violent, and my servants blustered, and began to threaten some of the men, who took to their large sticks, while the women commenced screaming and cackling like a flock of gulls before a storm. In the mean time, our old host had disappeared ; but just as matters were assuming a serious aspect, out he came from behind one of the tents, mounted on his mare, and bearing in his hand the missing weapon, which he declared he had found behind the tent

where we had breakfasted. There was no use in urging the charge of theft further. The gun was recovered, and the best possible sermon against a breach of the commandment would have been lost upon fellows who make a trade of thieving. So we gave the old man a *Barik-illah!* for his trouble, and accepted his services as guide upon our way to the camp, where we were to pass the night: but these services were faithless as his hospitality was false; for he left us just as we reached a very difficult position, and we saw no more of him.

Our way lay along the canal which we had just crossed, and which, as we understood, we were to re-cross in order to get to the tents of the Ben-i-Ruffeyeh, which were on its banks further down. An hour's ride brought us opposite to them; but the canal was not fordable, and the only means of crossing it was by a kellick pulled across by a rope. This would not suit our cattle and baggage, at least, without much loss of time; so our guides were at fault, and a long conversation with the Arabs on the other bank, ensued, with much roaring and bellowing across the canal The result was, that we were not to cross, nor go among the Ben-i-Ruffeyeh at all, but to keep the left bank; and this I was not sorry for, as the Ruffeyeh have rather a bad name, and do not profess allegiance to the Montefic, so that while in their country we should be entirely at their mercy. It was somewhat alarming, however, to discover so much ignorance on the part of our guides; and the more so, as Arab courtesy in the matter of guidance had already been proved a frail

reed to trust to. I therefore spoke to them rather sharply, on the score of their incapacity to perform the duty they had undertaken; and whether this put them more on their mettle, or that they had gathered confidence from some source unknown to me, they suddenly assumed an air of assurance—swore they knew the country well enough—that there was plenty of Arabs of the Ben-i-Rikâb ("sons of the stirrup," the tribe of our late host) a-head, with whom we should pass the night, and fare like princes.

The quantity of sheep and camels which made their appearance as we advanced, confirmed this account; and sure enough, about three o'clock we reached a parcel of tents inhabited by cultivating Arabs — poor devils enough, but able to give us what we required; and who, on being made easy on the score of recompence, received us readily. Indeed, we were forced this night to rely on the skill of one of their women for a dinner, our cook being indisposed or sulky; and a truly Arab mess she made of it, being a pillaw, or rather mash of *itheree* —a kind of large millet, seethed with part of a poor kid, purchased by my orders, chiefly for my servants, to compensate for their fast of the preceding night.

It is a provoking thing in these Arabs that they never can do a service without disgusting the party obliged, and effacing the value of it by some abominable dirty attempt or another. Our hosts really behaved well to the best of their ability this night, and I had prepared for them a handsome present; but fortunately, I made it a practice never to be-

stow such rewards until everything was found to be right, and we were ready to depart. On this occasion (on the morning of the 6th of January), after the baggage had been packed and loaded, the great coat of one of the servants, who had laid it down while giving us coffee, suddenly disappeared. The alarm was given, and the scene of the preceding day was acted over again to an *iota*. Our guards became clamorous and violent, and I declared, that unless the great coat were instantly given up, I should seize the three best abbas in camp, and perhaps burn a tent or two by way of example. It was a *brutum fulmen*, but had its effect; for no sooner was the first abba seized, than the great coat was found under a heap of brush-wood; where it had been put, they said, "by one of the children in mistake." The fact is, that the tendency to pilfering among these petty Arabs is as irrepressible as the love of open plunder is among the Bedooeens. In both it is invincible, except when controlled by the fear of superior power. Such thievish attempts are made on travellers generally during the bustle of departure. It costs them nothing; for detection occasions no shame, and some shallow excuse or subterfuge is always ready, as in the cases I have related, to shift the guilt from their shoulders, while the chances of success are always worth the taking. I read them a vain lecture about the folly, as well as dishonesty, of their conduct; contrasting it with that which I was about to pursue towards them, and pointing the moral by a liberal donation, for which I received in return, a kiss on the hand from the

old sinner of a host; to be followed, probably, by an execration, as soon as I was out of hearing, for not having given him more.

I tried here in vain to get a guide of the country; for we had heard that there were swamps of water in the way, and feared the consequence of losing our road; but our guides would listen to nothing, and even prevented those who would have come with us from joining the party. They forced our old host, indeed, to accompany them some two miles, to point out the direction of our route; after which, they trusted to such information as they could gather from those they met. The nature of the country in some measure justified them, for it was populous and cultivated, comparatively speaking — that is, there were clumps of Arab tents scattered about, and a large extent of land, sowed or prepared for seed. But such preparation! such tilth! What would a Norfolk or a Lothian farmer have said to it? The cultivated parts are chiefly in what are called *hores* — that is, low marshy land, periodically overflowed, on the edges of perennial marshes, the centres of which are covered with water and reeds. These are generally void of vegetation, exhibiting when free from water, a moist surface of clay or loam, much traversed by cracks. On this the seed is scattered without any previous agricultural operation. A great portion is picked up by birds; but such as falls into the cracks takes root, and sends up large stools of stalks that afford a plentiful crop. In some spots where the surface may be too entire to warrant so summary a process with hopes of success, and also on the

highest parts of the *hores,* the soil is very slightly scratched with a crooked stick dragged by two bullocks, and doing duty for a plough — never was so simple and primitive an instrument seen. It inflicts a scratch about two inches deep; such as a gardener would make with a common large-toothed rake. These scars are made about nine inches apart, the rest of the surface being untouched, and, where there are weeds, leaving them all standing. I have seen large fields so treated, with the camel-thorn and St. John's bread left standing, high and thick as before the operation, but already sowed with barley, and they never fail of producing a most abundant return. What would not good management make of such a subject! The grain is sowed in December and January, and the crop is ripe and reaped by April, before the ground becomes covered with water; nay, so fast does the blade grow, that they turn cattle and sheep on to eat it down, for a month at least, after which it is left to throw up the ear. This process probably increases the size of the stools, for in general, there are said to be from fifteen to forty stalks from each seed, and the ground becomes thus covered before the time of ripening.

Through these marshes did we make our devious and very winding way for several hours, till at length, crossing a singular ridge of sand hillocks that stretched across the line of our march, we descended into a very large *hore,* quite uncultivated, and covered with reeds and tufts of large coarse grass, much of which had already been burned, in order to encourage an early growth of young pas-

ture. The smoke of these conflagrations was seen on all sides. They are apt to prove not only tantalizing, but dangerous to persons unacquainted with the country, who are misled by imagining them to arise from the camps of Arabs not far off. Nothing, indeed, is so deceitful in point of apparent distance, as smoke by day or fire by night. You will see smoke distant three days' journey, which, as you approach it, seems constantly close to you. The rule by which those familiar with this deception, judge when smoke is really near at hand, is when they can observe its eddying motion upwards.

The *hore* which we had now reached, was one appropriated entirely to pasturage for buffaloes, animals which delight in mud and water, and immense herds of which are kept by a peculiar race of Arabs, well known along the banks of the river by the name of *Mâdan*. They are fixed, not migrating like other Arabs; they exist upon the produce of their buffaloes which, with a few sheep and cows, form all their property, and live in huts formed of split reeds, along with the animals that form their support, and which they scarcely exceed in intellectual endowments. It is from the notorious uncouthness and brutality of their habits that the other tribes of Arabs give the name of *Mâdan*, that is, ignorant, from two Arabic words, signifying *not wise*. They have also the reputation of being the most inveterate thieves of the whole country, and probably they are not a whit behind their neighbours in the art of petty larceny; but to say that they exceed them is, I suspect, going too far,

and doing the nation at large a piece of gross injustice: indeed, wild and brutal as they are, I did not, I confess, discover so great a difference between them and the other tribes.

They received us rather sullenly at first; but after a few words of explanation, all went on smoothly enough. They did not profess to entertain us, any more than did we to consider ourselves their guests; but they gave us what we required at tolerably fair prices, and assisted us in getting water, wood, &c.: moreover, they pledged themselves for the safety of our cattle, keeping watch themselves, upon the understanding that this service should be considered in the present they were to receive on our departure.

As for themselves, they and their domiciles were certainly curiosities. The last were like large cages made of reeds, like split rattans; anything but weather-tight; nor did it appear to me that the largest exceeded eight or ten feet long by six or eight broad. As for a division of chambers for men and women, nothing of the kind appeared to be dreamt of: even the young buffaloes made common property of the frail tenements, nor am I sure that the old ones were altogether excluded. Each shed was surrounded by a little space inclosed by split cane-work, and walls of brushwood which served for defence as well as for fuel. Indeed, from a distance, little was visible but the piles of brushwood and thorns, some seven feet high; and even an enemy might have been puzzled to take undue liberties with such a defence, if prohibited from the use of fire. A single

spark, however, you would suppose would be enough to set the whole in a blaze; and it is astonishing that such an accident does not oftener occur; for there are fires of this very substance burning in numbers every night and morning in and among the inclosures.

It was curious to see the great droves of these huge buffaloes returning home in the evening, each going straight to its master's hut without driving or constraint of any kind; and a pretty pickle you may believe both huts and inclosures are made by such inmates. Indeed, the whole plain round the camp was in a state of dirt and defilement not exceeded by the dunghills of a farm-yard at home.

The human animals that issued from these dens of abomination at our approach, bore certainly as much the appearance of the dregs of the human species as can well be imagined. Many of the adults were scarcely clothed—of the children, numbers were entirely naked; and as for their mothers, really I am at a loss for words to convey an idea of their *farouche* appearance. I however won the heart of one of the she-bears by a present of some copper coins to her two cubs, who had at first ran screaming away from me; and I do believe this very moderate donation had no small effect in smoothing the way to our subsequent welcome; for the woman became active in procuring milk and such things, and I heard her chattering away to the men about us at a great rate; but it brought upon me a whole host of petitioners for similar favours, who came holding up their naked shrieking younglings to attract my attention and partake of my coin. Of the men, how-

ever, I must say, that there were many who had as good a claim to decency of appearance as the Arabs of the petty camps and tribes we had hitherto seen, particularly those of the Fellah or cultivating tribes.

It was not surprising that these savages, who had never seen strangers of our appearance, should be much astounded at the arms and paraphernalia we displayed; but it was a little curious to find that my sketch-book and pencil, which I took out to make a sketch of some of their strange figures, appeared to be the object of most admiration; I presume, because they comprehended with surprising quickness somewhat of their use; and when they did do so, it was truly amusing to see them first come forward to have their portraits taken, and then, like a coquettish child, hiding their faces and running away, or pushing others of their friends into what I suppose they thought a scrape. To complete their wonder, I took out one of my Promethean matches, and lighted it by a stroke of my knife upon my pistol-butt. They had clustered thick around me; but this feat made a speedy scatter, and the creature opposite to the jet of flame staggered back as if he had been shot; then all rushed forward again and gazed upon the brightly burning paper as if it had been lighted by a miracle.

I must not forget to mention that we passed several old sites of importance to-day, marked by the usual mounds of brick, glass, and pottery in fragments, and, at some distance, very large and extensive remains belonging to a place called by the Arabs Yôkha, or Jôkha; besides several others not far from

the camp, bearing each some trivial name, but which tradition says belonged to one large ancient city: there were some also obviously of Mahometan origin. We saw the mounds of Sunkhera, bearing about south-west from us. Workha (the ancient Orchoæ, of which more hereafter,) was said to bear north-west, about a day's journey.

January 7. We were up and on horseback at half-past seven, that is, after having breakfasted. The natives clustered round us as we ate, encompassing us as one of my people said, "like the setting of a stone," and received the present I gave them quietly, and without much appearance of satisfaction or the contrary. Our course lay to the S.S.W. through the marsh, and, after two hours' march, we reached an obstacle which occasioned much difficulty and delay, and, indeed, nearly stopped us altogether in this direction. This was a watercourse, some thirty or forty yards wide, and, as it seemed, very deep, known to the natives by the name of the Shut-ul-kâr, which we were informed had its origin at a point some two days' journey, to the north-west, and which runs into the marshes fed by the river Hye. We afterwards learned that it communicated even with the Euphrates, probably near Semâva, and that boats formerly used it as a channel of traffic. It was a sad stumbling-block to us at the present time; for there was no boat to be had, and it was too deep, where we first reached it, to be forded. We rode along its course for some time, conducted by two Mâdan Arabs, whose services our obstinate guides on this occasion, convinced of their own ignorance,

condescended to accept, to a spot which they declared to be passable; but on trying it, which was done by one of the Arabs, who stripped himself naked for the purpose, the water was found to reach his arm-pits, and consequently to be too deep for loaded mules to ford. This mischance the Arabs informed us had occurred from a sudden rise in the rivers, of which they were not aware, as two days before, they assured us, the water did not reach their knees. It was fast increasing, too, as we ourselves could see while standing on the bank.

No time was to be lost—that was clear; yet what, after all, could we do?—how was our baggage to be got across? Such was our question to our guides.—"These two fellows will carry it on their heads," was the reply: but neither they nor the Mâdans offered to stir a step in the affair. Then there was, as usual, a long and noisy consultation, and another trial on horseback to ascertain whether the horses would answer the purpose of transporting the baggage across; but the experiment only served to show that the tallest of my Toorkoman horses could not keep his back dry—so we were once more at a stand. The obstacle itself was not so formidable in itself, as the fear that it might only be the first of a series of a similar nature and still more insurmountable, from the character of the country; but, as our guides assured us that it was the worst we should have to contend with until we should cross the Euphrates itself, I told them to lose no time in sending to the next Mâdan village and procuring for hire as many men as would enable us to get our

baggage across, without delay. The offer of hire had a magical effect: "Oh oh!" said the guides, "if it is a question of pay, bismillah! here are we ready and willing to work, and we'll soon have the baggage over;" and so at the word, our two guides, the two Mâdan Arabs, and two others of our company, stripped to the skin; and seizing the baggage, began to wade the water with it on their heads: but the operation on a cold day was so unpleasant, that two of the volunteers gave up after a couple of trips, and the rest soon became exhausted; for we were obliged to divide the whole of the large packages into small parcels, in order that it should be light enough to be carried, and every saddle and pack-saddle of the twenty horses and mules in company, had also to be thus ferried over, so that I thought the business would never end, and in effect every one of the workmen did strike work while seven loads still remained on the bank. Some persuasion and a little firmness, however, secured the completion of the unpleasant job, and at length I saw everything across. It was most fortunate that this day was warm in comparison with those that preceded it; had the contrary been the case, I do not think we should have made out the crossing at all. As for ourselves, cold though it was, we had also to strip to our shirts, that we might swim if necessary; and take our chance of a ducking, on horseback; but we, too, got across without accident, and in two hours and a half we had the pleasure of resuming our journey, after rewarding all our watermen on the spot for their trouble.

Once more we held our way across the *hores* which were fast filling with water, through the rising of the river we had just crossed; but at length we reached a sandy ridge, along which we travelled in comfort for a considerable distance. About two o'clock we passed a camp of the Arab tribe (Ul-Dour); but our guides had set their hearts upon taking up their quarters with another tribe close by, called Ben-i-Othman (children of Othman), with whom we also fell in, too soon indeed to come to a halt for the night; so with some difficulty I urged them onwards, in hopes of reaching the banks of the Euphrates, and making arrangements for crossing next morning.

The whole country here was covered with the flocks and herds of Arabs, whose tents were scattered over it in small groups of twos and threes; and at each small encampment we had a fresh battle with our guides, who thought only of securing themselves a good dinner; a thing which, if we persisted in thus pressing onwards, they began to despair of. At length, near sunset, we were forced once more to take shelter among a little knot of Mâdan huts, situated upon a high bank, having on one side the river bank, and on the other a large *hore*, to the great annoyance of the Arabs of our party, who knew they could get nothing from these people without paying for it; whereas, with the other tribes they were certain of a good feed for themselves, and plenty for their horses, free of cost.

This sort of living at free quarters, which the

Mâdan Arabs do not comprehend, causes the approach of the Bedooeen, or wandering Arabs to be much dreaded, and it was not without difficulty we got admittance, or even an answer from the inmates of the huts; but our guides from the last stage being Mâdans, gave us so good a name, that we got every assistance, and all we wanted, for money. To restore the good-humour of our own guides, I ordered a sufficiency of every requisite to be furnished them at my expense, and all went smoothly again. Meat, indeed, was not to be had, for they had no sheep. I was offered a calf of about a year old, which I might have purchased for about three shillings and eightpence; but we could not make use of it.

JANUARY 8.—The morning rose foggy and cold; flashes of lightning towards the east, last night, told of rain or snow on the Persian mountains, and the threat of the weather was likely to be made good against us to-day in a good drenching. It cleared, however, as we set ourselves to the serious work of crossing the Euphrates, on whose bank we were now encamped It was here broader than in most other parts, but varied irregularly by pools and swirls, sometimes swelling out to the breadth of one hundred and fifty yards, and then contracting its current within a space of half that extent. We had engaged our host, on the preceding evening, to supply us with a boat to ferry over the baggage; the horses were, of necessity, to take their chance in swimming; but the machine at first produced was only a small canoe quite unequal to the duty;

the whole day would not have sufficed to carry over in it our baggage alone. The magical word *buksheesh* (a present), however, procured the promise of a larger vessel; and accompanying our host a few miles down the river, we were gladdened by the sight of a good-sized boat, which had been stowed away out of view in a creek communicating between the river and the *hore*. This boat was built of a coarse sort of basket-work, nailed to a few stronger timbers, and coated outside with bitumen, some two inches thick; but she was sufficent to contain twenty men, and soon transported our goods to the other bank. The passage of the horses was a more nervous affair; for none of mine were accustomed to the water, and they backed and reared like wild colts, when urged to take to it. The method adopted on such occasions is, to drive into the water as many horses as the boat may be fit to tug across. One person for each horse sits in the boat, holding the animals' heads above water; and all being shoved off together, the horses, when out of their depth, take to swimming, and if they *cast* the right way, rather assist than retard the motion of the boat to the opposite bank. The whole is an operation of great nicety; for if you do not get the horses to move all at once, and to take kindly to the water, the boat cannot get off, and the rest keep fruitlessly kicking and swimming about. On the other hand, should one or more take the wrong direction when afloat, it is ten to one that he pulls the boat down stream, or back again ashore; and unless both boatmen and horse-

keepers have great presence of mind, the boat may be upset, or the horses strangled and drowned. Again, when all have got well afloat, the right holding of the animal's head is a point requiring no small skill; for if it be held too high, he cannot swim, and sometimes falls over and breaks his neck; and if too low, he may get too much water, and, when the transit is long, may choke before reaching land.

If I have succeeded in giving you an idea of the business we now had in hand, you will comprehend that it was rather an anxious one, and my horses seemed inclined to let me feel it to the utmost. They kicked, and reared, and plunged, and went every way but the right one. Twice did they turn the boat after it had got mid-channel, and drag it back; and several times I thought they would have staved in her side with their pawing. Patience and perseverance, however, prevailed, as they usually do; the Arabs were particularly useful in this business, and after three hours' hard fighting, we had the satisfaction to see everything, animate and inanimate, safe on the opposite bank without hurt or loss.

About half an hour after noon, having loaded our dripping beasts, we proceeded nearly south, over good sound ground sprinkled with tamarisk bushes, to a small camp of wretched Arabs, who were pitched in a plain as bare as the palm of my hand. This was wide of our true course, but we understood that this round was necessary in order to avoid a large *hore* that lay between us

and Arjah, or Arria, a village of reeds, which should have been our place of rest for the night. From our first crossing the river we had observed a great mass of mounds, with a lofty ruin, obviously of brick masonry, on the top of the largest one, and our halting at this camp gave us an opportunity of examining it, which otherwise we should not have had. So, after seeing our people fixed near a group of Arab tents, and all things in a fair train for procuring a supply of the necessary provisions, we set off at a canter to examine the ruin.

It proved to be about three miles from the camp, was called by the Arabs *Umghyer*, or *Mughyer*, and was altogether one of the most interesting relics of antiquity I have seen in the country. It consisted of a large square-shaped building, of furnace-baked bricks, springing out of a mound of rubbish formed unquestionably of its own débris; and I have not a doubt that were the débris removed, the remainder of the building would be found rising through it from the surface of the plain. The sides of this structure, which in figure was an oblong square, faced the cardinal points, and rose in two distinct stories to the height of at least eighty feet from the level of the ground. Those sides facing the east and west were the largest. I paced the western and northern sides: the former, with its débris, was eighty-seven paces. The building alone, of the northern, I made out to be forty-seven. Dr. Ross did the same, taking merely the square of the building, as far as he could judge. His paces were very long, and he

made the west side fifty-nine, and the north side thirty-nine, equal, probably, to sixty and forty yards respectively. This differs somewhat from my measurement, but exactness in so cursory an examination is not to be expected, and allowance must be made, not only for the difference of paces, but also of judgment, the lower portion of wall being entirely concealed from view.

The structure of this mass, in general, resembled that of the *Birs;* but there was none of that exquisite brick masonry so remarkable in the tower there. Like the Birs, however, it appears to have been built in solid square masses, somewhat detached and pervaded by small apertures, the use of which is not understood. The bricks of which it is built are of a coarser and softer fabric than those of the central pile of the Birs: many of them were stamped with the arrow-headed characters met with in the buildings of old Babylon; and, in most places, they were laid together in thick beds of bitumen, which bore the impression of the matted reeds that doubtless were also interposed. The masonry, although inferior to that at the Birs or the Kasr, was still very good, and much of it very perfect, as no bricks appear to have been abstracted from it by the Arabs, as at Babylon. On the summit I observed a circular hole of some ten feet diameter, at present filled with rubbish, but which may descend into the body of the building. There was no appearance of internal division into chambers, nor other symptom of its having in any way been destined for the use or habitation

of man. The division into stories, one above another, diminishing in size, as in an Indian pagoda, was most conspicuous on the north and west sides, the other two being more ruinous; but even in them the bricks exposed were so shattered and corroded by age and weather, that it was impossible to decide with certainty, whether those that met the eye were or were not those of the original exterior coating, a circumstance which adds to the uncertainty of the measurement. Looking from the summit, we could detect the traces of a wall of brick, which appears to have formed an inclosure round the structure. Its foundations were of no great thickness, and the north side measured one hundred and eighteen of Dr. Ross's paces, say one hundred and twenty yards at least. Of the corners only three were visible; but near that to the south-eastward there was a pretty large conical mound, resembling the ruins of a bastion. I am not convinced by any means, however, that this wall is co-eval with the original fabric. Its apparent disproportion in magnitude and solidity, in my opinion, seems to indicate a subsequent and far more recent date; and there were near it the remains of walls constructed from the fallen bricks, that were evidently modern.

As for the structure itself, everything about and around it, indicates it to be co-eval with, and constructed for the same purpose as, the Birs at Babylon. The bricks with the arrow-headed writing; the bitumen cement, and reeds; the sepulchral vases, several of which, broken in pieces, were ob-

served protruding from the heaps around, and the débris of the same well-known character—all leave no doubt as to the period it belongs to. It may be mentioned that we saw little or no glass; but flints, pebbles, pieces of agate, &c. and fragments of old copper in abundance. Nor was there any of the vitrified masses of brick, so remarkable at the Birs, although vitrified scoriæ, like those of a brick-kiln, were abundant as elsewhere.

What may have been the use and object of these mighty buildings, many more of which, no doubt, than we are yet aware of, exist in these countries, I leave it to the learned among the antiquaries to determine. For my own part, I have little doubt that they all, including the Birs, were temples for the worship of the gods of that day. If the Birs be indeed that celebrated temple built by Nebuchadnezzar and described in Holy Writ, and mentioned by ancient historians as the temple of Belus, there is little doubt, that all the rest were structures for the same purpose; nor is it improbable that what were originally Chaldean temples, became subsequently dedicated to the fire worship of Zoroaster, which is but a modification of the ancient Sabæan religion professed by those Chaldeans. This is indeed the belief and tradition of the country regarding several of those structures, and there is one of them near Hoomaenee on the Tigris, which we did not see, which they call *Bâb-ul-Nâr*, or the gate of fire.

Around this building the country is strewed with mounds, denoting an ancient site, particularly to the

south-east; but these we had no time to examine, as it was close upon sunset; indeed, they offered no object of interest beyond dozens that we had seen, and a mere cursory view could have produced no useful result, so we turned our horses' heads and gallopped back to the camp.

I forgot to mention, that around the building we observed several large fragments of a compact black stone, resembling that which forms the well known lion at the Kasr in Babylon; and which, from the rounded polish of some parts, appear to have belonged to some colossal statue. It is well known, that the early Mahomedan conquerors broke or defaced every image they found representing men or animals; a practice in which they were imitated by their successors of more modern times; and this may account for the rarity of such objects of art in this and most Mahomedan countries.

On return to our people, we found ourselves domiciliated with as miserable a set of wretches as any that had yet cast up. They may treat the Mâdans with contempt; but these fellows, though real Montefics, were to the full as wild and ignorant as the others, and not one half so civil and hospitable. They did not even affect a show of hospitality, but sold us what we took from them at most exorbitant prices; nor were they even able at that rate to supply all our wants. So well did even the women understand the value of money, and overrate what they had to exchange for it, that I found it impossible to purchase certain antiques and cylinders offered for sale, although I tendered four times the value for them.

Jan. 9.—A cold frosty morning succeeded the rain of yesterday, and the ground was white with hoar as we mounted at a quarter past seven. Our march to the south-east led us with our backs to the wind and our faces to the sun, so that we soon got comfortably warm. A few hours' march, first over a bare-nibbled plain, and then through a dry *hore*, brought us back again to the river's banks, and opposite to the reed houses and black tents of the great encampment of the Montefic Arabs. Every one who has heard or read of these countries, must be aware that the Montefic is one of the largest and most powerful tribes in this part of Arabia. It originally consisted of two principal stocks,—the Ajwad and Ben-i-Malek, who are both in turn deducible from a very ancient tribe called Zahtân, whose summer haunts appear to have been much the same as those of the present tribe; extending from Ghurrâf to Wassit in Lower Chaldea, on the left, and from Semâva to Sook-u-Shiookh, on the right bank of the Euphrates. Hostilities arising between these two branches, chiefly from a dispute about pasturage, produced that bloody catastrophe at the *Wadi-u-nissa*, or Vale of Women, which I have related to you in another letter. The Ajwâd being reduced by their rivals to a state of vassalage about two hundred years after the Hegira, were united with them, and the tribe then first took the name of *Montefic*, or the "united."

For a long time the Montefic derived their pecuniary resources only from the produce of their own lands; but about the year 1744, they obtained the

right of dominion and taxation over a small tract of country above and below Sook-u-Shiookh, themselves, at the same time paying a stated sum to the Sultan's treasury. One of their Sheikhs, *Saadoon*, however, thought fit to refuse this tribute, and advanced in hostile guise against Bussora. He was surprised by Suleiman,—a Mamlook officer of the Pashah, surnamed *Aboo Leila*, or the "Son of Night," from the rapidity of his movements,—his army cut to pieces, and himself slain; minarets of the heads of the slain being built on the field of battle. But the victor was generous to the family of the vanquished, and the Montefic once more lifted their heads from the depths of adversity. Taking advantage of the troubles of the Pashalic, and the threats of coterminous states, the Sheikhs of the Montefic, particularly Sheikh Hammeed-ul-Thameer, contrived to acquire a great increase of power, and appropriated the whole country from the mouth of the Shut-ul-Arab to Sâmava, defying the repeated attempts of successive Pashas to recover their lost possessions. The late Pashah, Daood, at length, by his intrigues, induced Ajeel, nephew of Hummeed, to revolt against his uncle, and elevated him to the chieftainship of the tribe. He was also so fortunate as to succeed in getting both Hummeed and his brother Hashed into his possession, by which means he once more broke the power of the Montefic and reduced them to comparative obedience, in which they still remain. They still occupy the banks of the river from Semâva to Bussora, extending southward and westward far into the desert, from Shagra to the

Vale of Hameer, west of Semâva, &c. possessing, too, all the country between the Hye and Koorna, with some tracts to the west of the former. Of the present numbers of the tribe and dependent clans it is difficult to obtain any correct account, as jealousy or ignorance gives rise to such contradictory statements, that there is no trusting to what we hear. There is, however, good reason to believe that they do not fall short of from twenty to thirty thousand families. Their contingent to government in case of need, but which they never supply, is twelve thousand horsemen; and it is said, they could, without much difficulty, muster nearly double that number. Since the fall of Daood Pashah, they have regained so much ascendancy over the weak government of Baghdad, that they are again in possession of the finest and most fertile tracts of the country, for which they pay nothing; but these acquisitions are fast producing the inevitable effects of such property; its new masters find themselves obliged to reside upon and protect it, and thus to make the first step from a nomadic to fixed life—from a purely pastoral to an agricultural people. Instead of wandering from place to place, the Montefic now congregate and linger far within the bounds I have specified, and generally near the rivers, cultivating extensive tracts, and planting groves of date-trees along its banks. Still, however, so strong is the Arab prejudice against a fixed life, that only the lowest and least esteemed branches or individuals among them, will condescend to be *Fellahs,* or operative cultivators: the rest continue under tents,

moving about within a contracted space, sending their flocks and herds to feed over the wide tracts that, under present circumstances, are unfit for cultivation, but which, in times of old, were like a garden.

Yet these proud wanderers, the real owners of the soil, though scorning to labour themselves, not only condescend to enjoy the comforts derivable from agriculture, but exact them to the utmost from the serfs. They make the Fellahs work hard for them, or each little Sheikh, or head of a family, lets out to the cultivators such portions of land as may have been assigned to him, screwing out of them as high a rent, and exacting as much extra value as he can get, while he wanders at will, enjoying the lazy life he delights in. The consequence of all this must, sooner or later, be a complete change in the habits and state of these Arabs. In time, they must become all and wholly agriculturists. The government of the Pashalic cannot continue for ever feeble and ineffective, yet tyrannical, as it now is. It must either improve, or the country pass into other hands, who will force the Montefic and other Arabs to quit their usurped possessions, or become regular subjects, acknowledging its supremacy, and paying a suitable tribute for the land they may be permitted to retain. They will have become too much wedded to their acquired comforts to relinquish them for the life they have gradually abandoned; a struggle or a sacrifice must bring the question to an issue, and they will lapse into quiet husbandmen and farmers.

In fact, were the system of the Turkish govern-

ment even to undergo no alteration, some such consummation would still of necessity take place. Nejd, as the interior of Arabia is called, swarms with other tribes as powerful as the Montefic, and not like them, as yet enervated by comparative ease and desuetude from active strife. These will one day or other pour down from their deserts, as the Scythian hordes were wont to do on civilized Europe, or as the Jerboah and the Aneiza have lately done in these parts, and hemming in the tribes of the Euphrates, force them to concentrate themselves upon their cultivable lands; trusting to the aid of Government to assist in retaining these, while the distant pastures will fall into the hands of new adventurers. Such successive waves have, in fact, constantly appeared, and confirm the voice of reason and analogy by the proof of experience and precedent; but it is a sad and mortifying prospect—a wretched doom for the fairest portion of central Asia; and surely it is a subject of earnest and virtuous hope, that some happy revolution may speedily take place, which shall restore prosperity to Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and cause the garden of this ancient paradise to bloom once more.

We were now about to see a portion of the Montefic in one stage of this transition state. The eastern bank of the river for miles and miles was covered with small houses, made of split reeds; just as those of the Mâdans, but larger and more carefully constructed, and surrounded by inclosures of the same material. Many of these houses were built really with great taste, having long arched roofs and

a sort of turret at each corner, which gave them the appearance of little gothic-built churches. The construction is simple enough. Tall reeds, perhaps fifteen or twenty feet high, are taken and bound in clusters with *withies*, or rope-bands made of themselves, and planted in the ground like posts, in two rows, at proper distances; the small ends are then bent till those of the opposite clusters in each row meet, when they are bound together by other smaller bundles laid longitudinally, and tied to each post and on the roof. This framework is covered, both sides and roof, with mats made of the same reeds, split and ornamented with neat lattice-work, according to the fancy and skill of the artist. One would imagine that such slight structures were but ill calculated to resist storms of wind and rain; but I am informed they do so very effectually, and certainly they are more comfortable than tents. But what a piece of affectation it is to prefer such flimsy concerns to the more solid huts and houses of clay inhabited by the peasantry of villages! because, forsooth, they are but temporary, and therefore involve a slighter deviation from the erratic habits of the true Bedooeen Arab. Among the reed huts I did, it is true, see a few clay-built houses; but I was told these were only store-houses belonging to the Sheikhs, and some merchants, as safety-keeps in case of fire—another symptom of approaching fixation, not to be overlooked in the aggregate.

At this place which was called *Koote*, or the fort, from the ruins of an old fort near it, and Shiookh, from its being the dwelling-place of the Sheikhs,

were assembled the greater part of the immediate clan and relatives of Sheikh Issaw, the chief of the tribe: and here, also, resided his uncles and brothers, and cousins to several degrees—all Sheikhs by courtesy to the number of one hundred and forty, or one hundred and fifty, I was told. Each of these has a tract of land of greater or less extent, according to rank and favour, assigned him, which he either cultivates on his own account, or lets out to Fellahs. On the produce of this they live, and feed besides their own families a number of retainers, all of whom have some further property in flocks and herds..

The principal expense of an Arab chief consists, in fact, in his daily consumption of victuals. Most of them provide according to their means an evening meal for those who are particularly attached to their person, and there never is any want of mouths to consume the victuals, which are placed upon the board, whatever their amount. Thus, the late Sheikh Ajeel is said to have killed from twelve to fourteen sheep for daily consumption, and the expenditure of rice and other articles of food was in proportion. Besides this, whenever he had a guest whom he desired to treat with distinction, it was his wont to slaughter a camel for the feast.

The present Sheikh is not so liberal; and I have reason to suspect that this flaming account of plenteous feasts is considerably exaggerated; but some such expenditure is absolutely necessary to maintain the popularity of an Arab chief, and each of the small Sheikhs emulates his superiors as far as he

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can. As for their other expenses they are few and small. They do not, like the Turks, lavish large sums upon the dress or ornaments of their women. The wives even of the Sheikhs may be seen clad in some common blue or checked stuff, hard at work cooking dinner, or baking bread for the evening's repast, their heads swathed in two or three cotton or silk handkerchiefs; and as for ornaments, a large gold filigree button in the nose, and a parcel of coins and beads strung round the neck and tied amongst the hair—perhaps some rude earrings, bangles and anklets of silver, with some other trifling trinkets, these, so far as I can ascertain, form the sum total of an Arab lady's *bijouterie.*

On their own persons they are not more lavish. A fur *kiurk,* or jacket, a finer silk or scarlet cloth gown, and a better abba, or a head-dress with some gold thread-work, alone distinguish them from their dependants. They keep hawks and greyhounds; but the expense of these must be a trifle; and as for their horses, or rather mares, for they seldom ride any other, they are a source of no small profit, as all the male produce is sold to supply the demand from the neighbouring countries. Mares they will very seldom part with; and it is certainly no exaggeration to say that they value a favourite mare far above the most favoured wife—the one, if lost, may be replaced, the other cannot; and some of the bitterest feuds between Arab tribes have arisen from the theft of a mare.

When we approached this temporary town, for we learned that in a few days more it was to be

abandoned for another position, with some difficulty we procured a boat and sent over to inform the Sheikh of our arrival, and learn how we were to proceed. In a short time we were told what had before been rumoured, that Sheikh Issaw was absent with a party of his tribe, repairing a *sud* or dyke, to retrain the waters of the Euphrates from overflowing the country; but that he was expected back to Sook-u-Shiookh next day, so that we, therefore, should proceed to that place immediately, to meet him, when in the mean time, a person was prepared to supply all our wants.

To explain this rather singular occupation of the Sheikhs, I must tell you, that among the conditions of tenure by which the Montefic hold possession of the *Shâmieh,* or western bank of the Euphrates, there is a condition that they shall at all times maintain in good and sufficient order, the dykes from Semâva down to Bussora, on both sides, by which the waters of that river are restrained from overflowing and destroying the country: and this, as on it depends the preservation of their own cultivation, they performed for several years. But the great flood of 1830-1 not only rose above, but actually swept away the greater part of the *suds,* so that the country behind the river bank became a swamp, down to Bussora; which place, from being once remarkable for its healthiness, has since then, from the effluvia exhaled by the stagnant waters, become as notorious for disease. The tribe, for their own sakes, are gradually renewing these *suds,* but, I believe, in a very inefficient manner, and they,

consequently, are always going wrong. It was in repairing one of these near Koorna, that Sheikh Issaw had been for some time occupied: as for his return, we were so accustomed to Arab lying and inhospitality, that we suspected the story of his return had only been got up by Sheikh Bunder, his brother and lieutenant, in order to send us away and get quit of the expense of entertaining us; but there was no help for it; we were ordered to Sook-u-Shiookh, where, it was said, a house and all things should be made ready for us, so we re-loaded our beasts, which had been already picketted out in a date-grove, and rode on to Sook-u-Shiookh.

LETTER V.

Sook-u-Shiookh.—Its Bazaars.—Difficulty of procuring Lodgings.—Trade of the Place.—A Persian Friend.—Mode of feeding Guests at free Cost.—Commerce and its Effects.—A Character. Extortion.—The Sheikh's Tent.—Assembly—and Appearance—his Conversation—and Coffee.—Leaves us in the Lurch.—We lose a Companion.—Beauties of Sook-u-Shiookh.—We follow the Sheikh to Koote.—Speculation regarding our homeward Course.—Value of a Sheikh's Promise.—Second Interview with his Highness.—Doings thereat.—A Sheikh's Gift.—We commence our Return.—The Sheikh's Cousin.—Disposal of his Highness's Presence.

THE town, or rather large village of Sook-u-Shiookh, the name of which signifies, "The Market-place of the Sheikhs," as being the great trading mart of the Montefic country, was just two hours, or about eight miles down the river from Koote. The whole banks as we passed, and far beyond our march, were fringed with date-groves, mostly going to decay; and exhibited a succession, almost uninterrupted, of ruined walls of former villages, among which were several square mud enclosures, filled with the huts of the Fellah Arabs. The ground was cut up by rude water-courses, which held the place of the ancient magnificent system of irrigation, and form very annoying obstacles to the progress of the

passenger. I understand that the whole bank of the Euphrates, often on both sides, from Semâva to Bussora, exhibits these evidences of former dense population and cultivation, mingled with the spurious and rude attempts of the Montefic Fellahs, and dotted thickly with the reed villages and camps of the Arabs. What a country it would be under a wise and steady government!

Sook-u-Shiookh itself, is a walled town of considerable size, which once contained, perhaps, six or seven hundred families. Its appearance from a distance is rather neat and attractive, embosomed as it is in thick date-groves, among which its houses are seen to advantage; but a nearer approach makes the deception apparent. It is almost a mass of ruined houses, among which a few, still tenanted, contain the survivors from the plague which lately depopulated Baghdad, and which did not spare the Montefic. Of all human communities I have seen, I do think this the most filthy and abominable. It was almost impossible to walk the streets without contamination; and the smell of the butcher's shops rendered all approach to them impossible to civilised nostrils. The Bazaar was rather extensive, but sparely tenanted. Most of the shops were filled with articles suited for the Arabs alone; spears, daggers, swords and shields, saddles, abbas, tent-ropes, &c. There were plenty of grocers and druggists: loaves of white sugar, coffee, and coarse spices were abundant, as well as the common articles of brown sugar from India, dates, soap, &c. &c.; but I looked in vain for a china or earthenware cup to replace our

broken tea-cups; and, stranger still, there was not a cooking-pot either of earthenware or brass, to be had in the place.

When we approached this emporium, which we did through a succession of stinking pools of water, the guide, sent us by Sheikh Bunder, made us come to a halt until he should have provided us a lodging to go to. His search was at first unsuccessful, as it seemed, for forth again he issued from the gate, followed by several Turk-like and turbaned Arabs with whom there was a mighty palaver in a very noisy key, and much gesticulation, *à l'Arabe*. The result was, that they took us, not into the town, but into a yard surrounded by a reed inclosure and containing a reed house, the whole in so beastly a condition that we immediately left it with indignation, and proposed to encamp outside. But this did not accord with their ideas of hospitality, or their orders, I suppose; for they opposed the motion strongly, and led us, like a string of wild geese, into the town. Here, also, however, it seemed to be a failure, and we stood, staring and stared at, for another quarter of an hour, when it came into our heads to inquire whether there was not a caravanserai in the place. This struck them all as a bright thought, and away they hurried us to the caravanserai—but alas! for their good intentions, it turned out to be such a place! A long dark passage, with still darker cells, opening into it, and these mostly occupied by merchants, who sat there all day. They proposed clearing one for us; but we might as well have thought of taking up our quarters in the middle of the

Bazaar, so we resolved, come what might, to take to our own tent and put it up in the best place to be found.

When they saw us resolved, they requested us to follow them to a spot which they declared to be the best, and accordingly we trudged after our leaders, bag and baggage, quite round the town to the river-side, where, indeed, we saw spaces of ground curiously enough occupied. In every quarter there were what appeared to be large heaps of mats, six or seven feet in height, and spreading out to a breadth of fifteen or twenty. These, we learned, were chiefly heaps of merchandise, sugar, dates, corn, &c. landed from the boats that trade between that place and Bussora. Some were houses—hovels where people had their temporary habitation, and *pigged* in together while transacting their business. There were sheds and inclosures, too, where reeds and other lumber were sold and stowed; and alongside the river bank, to the top of which the water had almost risen, were fourteen or fifteen large boats lately arrived from Bussora, or returning there with produce. In fact, the trade of this place is very considerable; the quantity of sugar, coffee, drugs, indigo, and all sorts of Indian produce which passes up the Euphrates, in spite of all dangers and imposts, is surprising; and much of several articles such as hinna, indigo, sugar, &c. go all the way to Damascus. There really was somewhat of a bustle here. Dates are a great staple from Bussora, and were sold at very low prices. They were packed in bags, or rather mats, which must, I think, have held about

one hundred pounds, and were sold at from a shilling to one and threepence each.

On this sort of esplanade, which extended between the town wall and the river, a space was pointed out for ourselves and our cattle to occupy—a dirtier could scarcely have been imagined; but it was clear now that dirt and discomfort were the order of the place, so there was no help for it. Here we pitched our tent and picketted our cavalry, and were soon surrounded by the usual crowd of Arabs; but every one seemed thinking of himself—not of us; and I believe, in spite of mehmandars and guides, and abundance of fair promises, we should have come but scurvily enough off this night had we not fallen in with a Persian acquaintance of the Doctor's, who instantly attached himself to us, and bustled about in our service. He had been a species of adventurer in Baghdad, and either, in consequence of tricks or misfortunes, had found his way hither, where, by flattery, complaisance, and a readiness at accounts and letter-writing — matters which the Arabs are rather deficient in — he made his way, first in the favour of the late Sheikh Ajeel, and since in that of the present one, Sheikh Issaw.

We found he had become a bankrupt in trade, and he complained grievously to us of the losses he had sustained, besides the plunder of two houses in the late affray at Baghdad. But he laboured so hard to convince us that he was the Sheikh's fac-totum, that we begun to doubt whether he had anything to say to him at all: to us, however, he was of use. He soon procured grain for the horses

and promised victuals for ourselves and the people. The governor, a wretched-looking fellow, now came and assured us that all we could want was at our service; accordingly, as a commencement, a plentiful supply of grain made its appearance; but we soon had an unpleasant intimation of the way in which the supplies were obtained here, for scarcely had our horses began to masticate the barley, when an outcry was heard, and a man appeared at our tent door, venting the most furious imprecations and using the most violent gestures. It turned out that he was some corn-merchant from whose shop one of the governor's men had unceremoniously, and without either form or promise of payment, taken the grain which we imagined had been meted out from the stores of Sheikh Issaw. He denounced us, together with the Sheikh, governor, and all concerned, as tyrants and robbers — swore that the grain so taken was not *Huldll* (lawful), and, in short made a desperate row. It was with some difficulty I could pacify him so far as to wait till the morning, in order to have time to inquire into the matter, when, I promised if the matter turned out to be as he represented it, I should pay him for his grain—but I heard no more of the business and know not how it was settled.

In the matter of *provende* for the biped portion of our party we were less fortunate. After waiting for hours in vain, we desired one of the governor's men in waiting to be asked when dinner was coming. "Dinner!" said he—"do these fellows want dinner? — what do they eat? — fowls? mutton?"—

"Yes," replied our Persian; "and you had better send some camels; they will eat them up, and perhaps you too!" Then returning to us, he desired us to be of good cheer, for *he* would get us a splendid dinner. Assuredly nothing had been done in the matter before; for it was not until two hours after, that is, past eleven at night, that three or four ragged Arab footmen rushed into the tent, bearing a pile of boiled rice, with a bunch of yellow, tough, hard-boiled fowls, four our five in number, tied all together, for our use.

We now learned that the Sheikh was really expected to arrive on the succeeding day; a report which proved correct; for before the evening he came, and encamped on the outside of the town not far from where we were pitched;—for, with the prudish affectation I have already alluded to, this Sheikh of the Montefics makes it his boast that he never was, and never will be within the walls of this, his market town, or, indeed of any town. The dislike of all Bedooeen Arabs to walls is as great as their love for thire black tents — from these they can get out when they like; but brick, or even mud walls, form, occasionally, inconvenient restraints upon liberty of action.

In the mean time, on the morrow (the 10th), we looked about us, and enjoyed the repose and lounging inaction which is so sweet after a long fag. Nor was the day uselessly spent; for it afforded us an opportunity of adding to our information, and seeing some amusing characters who made their appearance in our presence.

It would have delighted a political economist to detect, as we did, even in this rude place, the beneficial influence of commerce, and the glimmering of knowledge and civilisation it was spreading amongst the wild inhabitants. We met with several of them who had traded to Bussora, Bushire, and even to Bombay, who had had their eyes in some degree opened by glimpses of these foreign parts—who had met with Englishmen, and now, when they heard of our arrival, came forward with offers of assistance, which were neither empty nor unacceptable. It was strange to hear English words enunciated by an Arab mouth, yet more than one of these people addressed to us several English phrases, and understood still more of that tongue, while Hindostanee was common; and I own that I hailed with a sort of brotherly feeling, the accents of that language which were once, and have ever continued so interesting to me. It was pleasant, too, to listen to the high praises which these Arabs paid to our nation, from their own experience with individuals of it in commercial dealings; and it was amusing to hear the magnificent and exaggerated accounts they gave their staring countrymen of our power and wealth, and influence: in fact, it was a very pretty specimen of Arab romancing. Mr. Finlay was made out to be a general-officer of artillery; and as for me, I was some high functionary sent by the Sultan of *Room* (Turkey), with a dress of honour and presents to their Sheikh. The display of our fire-arms and pyrotechnics served to confirm the charm; and when they heard that our king possessed several vessels

mounting one hundred and twenty guns and carrying from twelve to fifteen thousand men, their wonder was at its height. I fear, however, that their avarice kept pace with their astonishment, and that the predominant feeling with the majority was regret that they could not appropriate our goods and riches.

Among the characters I have alluded to was one well known at Baghdad. He was by birth an Italian; but by some strange chance he had fallen into the hands of the Lesghees, from among whom, by I know not what succession of events, he escaped, and came into the service of my acquaintance, Borouski,* now an officer in the Persian service, and I believe it was in that capacity he first became known here. With Borouski, I think, he went to India, and there he attempted several plans for pushing his fortune; but all, it would appear, had failed, for he is still a poor devil, living by his wits. One of his last essays was as a commander, or rather an adjutant of Sepoys in the service of the present Moosellim of Bussora, who set him to drill some newly-raised troops; but he kept the poor man fourteen months, only giving him one month's pay, so "that would never do for him." He has since then entered into a sort of partnership with a horse-dealer of Bussora, in which he enacts, so far as we could comprehend, the part of servant, and he was waiting for his partner-master when we saw him. He appeared to be a clever fellow, talked Italian and a little French, besides Persian, Hindostanee, and Arabic; in fact, he is more of an Asiatic

* Subsequently killed at the siege of Herât.

than a European, and now gives himself out as a Mahomedan and a Hajee — keeps his fast and his secret—says his *Numáz*, and is received everywhere with distinction and perfect good faith, as a true follower of the Prophet.

Our Persian friend now made a mighty work about our introduction to the Sheikh, canvassing the "how" and "when," with great seriousness. There was, he affirmed, such a crowd and a noise and a bustle about the great man just then, that he considered it better for us not to think of visiting him till a late hour, when he should have dined and retired to his privacy—in the mean time, his worship had sent for the presents of which we were in charge. These we delivered; and though to some it might be matter of regret to lose a sight of the wild beast at feed, we contrived to comfort ourselves by a good dinner prepared by our own cook, and which we flattered ourselves would be lighter of digestion than that of the great man, inasmuch as it was honestly paid for, while the materials of his worship's repast had, we learned, been seized as required, from various shops in town, without form or even promise of payment, like the barley sent our horses on the previous night. No wonder that the good citizens and dealers expressed no particular anxiety for the frequent repetition of their lord's visits.

On further inquiry, we found that this sort of arbitrary extortion was quite the fashion here—that the Sheikh, or his officers, which is the same thing, supplied themselves just at free quarters with everything

they wanted, never thinking of reimbursement to the owners. The governor of the place, in particular, was infamous for such practices. His injustice and extortion had already driven away many persons from the town, and the general observation was that, if he were not removed, it would be soon totally ruined. Nor did his master profit by his exactions. "That fellow," said the Meerza, "will put to the Sheikh's account three times the quantity of provisions he has supplied you with; and yet, you see, he has not paid for a fraction of it." He endeavoured to engage me to represent this matter and the manner in which it was spoken of, to the Sheikh, when I should see him; but this I declined as an office unbefitting a stranger and guest, remarking, at the same time, that were the principal himself known as a just and equitable man, well-grounded complaints against his servants would not fail of reaching his ear by ordinary channels—the very fact of their not doing so was to me evidence that it was "like master, like man."

Our watches pointed nearly to eleven, and we were just turning in for the night, when the Meerza entered our tent, and told us that only then was the bustle over, and the great man able to receive us in a suitable manner. Accordingly, we sallied forth, and I wish I could convey to you a lively idea of what we saw. The Sheikh had a tent—a white tent—part of the present investiture sent by Allee Pashah to these chiefs. He had pitched it, too; but not in this did he receive his friends and the public; it was only his sleeping-place. We found him in

a temporary hut of reeds knocked up for his worship's accommodation, after a fashion at which these people are very adroit and which I have already described. To erect such a domicile requires scarcely more than fifteen minutes: to be sure it is not very substantial, but it serves as a shelter from the sun and wind, if not too violent—as for rain, we shall only say that the less there falls of it the better for the inmates.

In one of these structures, as rude as can be conceived, there was placed on the bare ground, round the sides, a narrow border of mats; across the upper end was laid, in like manner, a ragged strip of carpet. A dim, dirty, broken and torn linen lantern, which hung from one of the reed posts, shed a most dismal and uncertain light upon two dense rows of savages, whom, I think, I might defy Africa, New Zealand, Kamschatka, or the Esquimaux to surpass in dirt and wildness of aspect, seated with their backs to the matted walls, and barely rendered visible a huge bundle of clothes which was raised a little above the assembly on a rickety thing like an old hen-coop. A fissure in the upper part of this bundle of indescribable apparel disclosed a proboscis and glittering eyes, which might have belonged to almost any other animal as well as to an Arab, for all we could tell—they were, however, the property of the Sheikh of the Montefic himself. He did not rise to welcome us, but the superior portion of the bundle nodded and disclosed a mouth in addition to the other features, the teeth of which emitted a white lustre, while a guttural sound rose above

the hum of the assembly, enunciating the words of welcome.

With some difficulty did we make our way upwards over a whole row of pipe sticks, to the right hand of the hencoop, where we sat ourselves down; after which, for a while, nothing further passed. It so happened that the great man upon the roost discovered that one of his guests was an M.D.; and no sooner had he done so, than he appeared to be animated by a new spirit. Whisking himself round in his crib, he began a most animated detail of his numerous ailments, and ended with a demand to know whether the Doctor would feel his pulse that night, or the morrow? Like certain other great men, however, he replied to his own question; and thrusting a bony arm from beneath the mass of his coverings, he nodded to the Doctor to feel away at once. This the Doctor did accordingly, and it was not easy to tell whether the chuckling laugh with which he received that gentleman's intimation of there "being nothing the matter with his worship, that he could discover," was one of approval or disappointment.

Till the protrusion of this paw we had seen too little of the fleshy tabernacle of the Sheikh, to enable us to judge whether he belonged to the fat or the lean kine. There was, to be sure, a great round protuberance of a nose, a pair of thick blubber-lips, and heavy cheek-bones, which rather led to the conclusion of his being of the fat-favoured breed: but the gauntness of the arm and wrist told against this surmise; and the truth still lies hid among the

ample swathes of the Sheikh's cloaks and shulwârs, nearly as deep as in the draw-well where the personification of that fair virtue is said to dwell in these iron times.

The state of the great man's health having been amply discussed, and he having made a demand upon the Doctor's stores for sundry medicines, which need not be specified, he began to unlock the stores of his own wisdom and information on other subjects. The affairs of Persia having, by some one, been brought under observation, and a remark made that the news of the Shah's death had been confirmed, the Sheikh made inquiry, "Who is the Shah?" On being satisfied in this particular, and moreover being informed that the said Shah had given up the ghost at Ispahân, the chief of all the Montefics repeated the word, "Ispahân?" said he; "Ispahân?—where is it?—what is it?—a city?—a country?—or what?" On this head also information was afforded him, and his worship continued in the most condescending and amiable manner to enlighten his own ignorance, and gather knowledge without the least of that affectation under which some are apt to cloak their deficiency of knowledge. In the mean time ginger tea, and bitter coffee, were handed about from certain caldrons, superintended by as black an imp of a slave as the arch fiend himself, who looked still more Satanic as he bent over a smothering fire of charcoal, which served to keep his liquor at the proper simmering point.

I must mention, by the way, that there were few things about Sook-u-Shiookh so good as this

ginger-tea, which is made of, what we call at home, "ginger-tablet," dissolved in hot water to a good thickish syrup, and sometimes flavoured with a little cardamom or cloves. The Arabs, indeed, appear fond of cardamoms, and generally use this spice with their coffee. When you enter the tent of a petty Sheikh, or head of a family, and coffee is got ready before you, you may generally observe your host, just before the pot boils for the last time, or about that stage of the process, take from his own private purse or pocket, a few grains of something which he hands to the *cahwachee* to be infused in the beverage; they are grains of cardamom, and it is held, I believe, as an indispensable compliment to a guest whom they desire to honour.

The Sheikh's coffee, like all you get from the Arabs, was as strong as brandy, and as bitter as gall, but fine, warm, refreshing stuff. When we had sipped one or two of their thimble-full cups of it we rose and withdrew. It was just upon midnight, and we were not sorry to get to our couches. With regard to the time and mode of our return, the great man vouchsafed us scarcely a word. The Persian Meerza, however, who had been in the presence, standing at a humble distance, told us the Sheikh meant us to remain there next day, when he would arrange our affairs, appoint us guides, and, in short, put everything in such a train as such a Sheikh should do. Judge of our surprise when, on waking in the morning, we learned that the great man had carried off his nobility at an early hour, leaving us directions to

follow him at leisure, to the very place we had left two days before, to meet him here.

This appeared a rather cavalier sort of proceeding, very opposite to all that previous accounts of Arab courtesy to guests had led us to expect; but we had nothing for it except to get out of the country of so churlish a chief, with all convenient despatch. In the mean time, we were to part with one of our companions. Mr. Finlay had hired a boat to go from hence to Bussora, and we accompanied him a little way down the river to see him on board. We do not part with a friend who has been our partner in the desert, in fatigue and anxiety, if not in peril, in the same indifferent manner that we take leave of a coach companion, and, I believe, all parties were sorry to say farewell, and carried good wishes of the rest respectively along with them. A fine, stiff, north-westerly breeze soon carried the vessel from our view round a reach of the river; our friend was gone, and the Doctor and I returned to our little tent, more sad than we left it.

On our way thither we had a view of the greater part of the female population of Sook-u-Shiookh washing clothes and drawing water at the river side; and, oh, Venus! what a display!—all—every one of them, were negresses, of a black so intense as mocks that of jet or pitch,—deep, dark, and dead-like; and as for features, each seemed to vie with the others in the degree of grotesqueness of her ugliness. What beauties were the comely West India Quashebahs to these! many a one have I

seen in that ill-fated land, that were really pretty and interesting; but here! O ye gods! what noses! what lips! what cheeks! what forms! Verily Sook-u-Shiookh may bear away the palm for female hideousness from every place of my acquaintance. I was told, indeed, that the fashionable Arab belles, thinking it inconsistent with their dignity to expose their own persons to view, send their sable attendants to do duty in their room. The whole of this part of Arabia, as well as Sook-u-Shiookh, and indeed the whole Pashalic of Baghdad, is supplied with these choice specimens of our race, by that special and extensive dealer in human flesh, our worthy friend and ally, the Imaum of Muscat.

By four o'clock P.M. we had turned our backs upon this Arab metropolis, and were entering a split-reed domicile at Koote, with the Persian Meerza for our Mehmander. And soon and decidedly did he commence the exercise of his functions as provider for the table; for on the other side of the reed fence which divided us from the family, a bustle was almost instantly heard, shrill sounds arose, in which the howls of females, and the screams of poultry struggled for the ascendency, and before we could well articulate an inquiry as to what all this might mean, four of the screamers — not the women, but the fowls—lay headless before us, their "shrill clarions" silenced for ever! Not so easily were the clamours of their unfortunate owners quieted; and one old lady, in particular, was so vociferous, that I insisted on knowing the cause. It was soon explained: the hopes of her household lay bleeding

before us. There was but one way to pacify the storm, I paid her twice the value of her feathered pets, and thus soon converted her imprecations into blessings.

The great point with us being always to get on, with the least possible delay, the Meerza was despatched across the river to discover what might have been already done towards expediting our movements. It had been our wish to return by a route to the east of the Hye, to visit Wassit, the ancient *Cascara*, and crossing at Koote-ul-Amâra, to proceed to Baghdad by the left bank of the Tigris. This, however, we soon found to be out of the question. Below, or to the east of the Hye, the *hores* or marshes are larger even than to the westward, and Wassit was by this time surrounded by a sea. Like Ophelia, however, we had had too much of water, and, in fact, the discomforts of the journey generally, being much disproportioned to its value in point of information, we only now thought of returning by the easiest and safest route. Whether this were by the east or west of the Euphrates was next the question, and this we left to the Sheikh's decision.

In choosing the route to westward of the river, we should have to pass through the country of the Khezail Arabs, a race who dwell among marshes like the Mâdans, but who are fierce and independent, and extremely jealous of all strangers who approach their haunts. They have generally withheld obedience to any Pashah, and yield neither tribute nor allegiance to the present one. It was

otherways in the days of Solymaun the Great, that stout-hearted soldier, and dreaded chief, whom I have already mentioned as known to the Arabs by the name of "Abu Leila," or "the Father of Night," from the rapidity and murderous success of his night expeditions. He found the means of teaching these amphibious savages to know their master. He cut off the sources that fed their marshes, drained them dry, and thus opened a way to attack them in their fastnesses; for, on former occasions, the Khezail had only to efface certain marks which might have guided an enemy as well as a friend, and to cut through a few dams or rising grounds, along which part of the road through their country passes, and retiring into the centre of their *hores*, like the otter to his den, set the invader at defiance.

It is remarkable that a people living among bogs and fens, should be the stoutest, fairest, and comeliest of all the Arabs; yet such, I am assured, is the case; and that the Khezail women are, many of them, very light-coloured and beautiful. Among them, however, it was not our fate to go. Their Sheikh is mighty independent, and, I suspect, on but questionable terms with the Montefics; but whether it were distrust of his power to secure us a good reception, or some other equally cogent reason, the chief of the last-mentioned tribe did not think fit to advise our proceeding by that route, on the contrary, after holding a short conversation with the two Jeshâm Arabs who had guided us hither, he resolved not only that we should return

nearly the same way we came, but with the self-same guides. During the interview we had had on the preceding evening with this august person, among the few words he had dropped concerning our route, he declared he would send along with us six of his own horsemen, and that we might go by what way we chose. This liberal resolution had now shrunk into the donation of a coarse old gown, by way of a *khelut*, or dress of honour, to our former guides, and a charge to them that they should see us safely back to the camp of the Zobeid chief.

It was late before the Meerza returned, and all he brought us was a tray of pastry from the Sheikh, or his harem, with the tidings that the great man had only arrived in time for dinner, having come by water, and his trackers not having been able to drag him sooner up stream. This, although accompanied by a promise to arrange matters immediately, was discouraging; for we knew, by experience, the meaning of *immediately* in Arabic, and, indeed, in most eastern languages; but there was no help for it, so we ate our pastry and composed ourselves to sleep. We had this evening, however, a visit from another and more respectable person than our Meerza, who was nothing better than an empty pretender and parasite. This was a man who had, at one time, been custom-master not only at Bussora, but over all the tolls levied by government on the Euphrates; but who now, by party animosity, had been reduced to the charge of that alone which is levied at this place of Koote. He had been befriended, in times of danger, by the

English Resident; indeed he owed his life to that gentleman's protection, and he was grateful, and desirous to be of use to any of that nation, so far as lay in his power. He came and sat with us this evening and promised every possible assistance in speeding us on our way.

Jan. 12.—The morning brought no news to cheer us. The hours passed on, and neither Meerza nor guide from the Sheikh. Noon came, and we learned that he was still fast asleep in his harem. No one would venture to rouse the sleeping bruin, and so we were forced to chew the cud of patience. Some time after noon, our new friend the Goomrookchee (or custom-master) came; and seeing our distress, good-naturedly went over to the Sheikh's camp to see what could be done. It was near three in the afternoon when he returned, with apologies from the great man; he had been weary, he said, and went to sleep and forgot us. He was sorry, very sorry; but if we could come over after dinner, we should receive the letters he was writing, and our leave, and everything we wished.

In the evening, accordingly, we crossed the river in a canoe of the Goomrookchee's and proceeded to the dwelling of the Sheikh. We found him seated in a reed-house, differing from the last only in the neatness of its structure. Along its sides were seated a row of abba'd Arabs, thick as they could stick, while at the top, where was spread the identical strip of ragged carpet of the former hut, sat the same mysterious bundle of clothes as before, in the same twilight, formed by the same ragged lantern

that shed its obscure effulgence over the former assembly. At the lower end, too, was seated just as formerly, my old Satanic-looking friend over a similar roasting-fire, with a most formidable *batterie* of coffee-pots and pans.

It was no easy matter to get a seat in this closely-wedged assembly, which, if the truth were known, felt jointly and severally, I dare say, no great readiness to give place to two infidels such as we; but at length a vacancy was made for me at the Sheikh's right-hand, and another, somewhere on the other side, for the Doctor, and then coffee, as deep in hue as the slave who brewed it, was handed to us from the seething caldrons at the fire. Scarcely had we swallowed it, when the Sheikh, who seemed to have nothing in his head but to make the most of the God-send he had got of a doctor, set himself to cross-question that gentleman respecting the uses and properties of certain medicines which he had begged and received; and full twenty minutes was his worship, I am sure, a summering and wintering the methods of taking a tartar-emetic vomit, and speculating upon its effects.

This delectable theme being exhausted, he condescended to make some inquiries as to the political state of Europe; desired to know how many kings were in *Fereng*, (the land of Franks,)—which of them was the most powerful?—whether the Russians or we were the strongest?—with a hundred other questions of like depth and shrewdness, involving the most ludicrous mistakes imaginable; which the Meerza and others of his counsellors, (I presume,)

made worse by their attempts at rectification or concealment.

In the mean time, there was some despatch of business. An old man, a Meerza or secretary, in his Highness's service, had taken his seat in front and a little to one side, and was employed in writing or preparing letters, which the great man sealed with his own signet after having read them. In order to perform this, however, he was obliged to order down from its perch the old lantern, and give to view its contents, which proved to be a farthing candle. This flaming minister being soon consumed by the searching wind which blew through the hut, it was replaced by another, in that simple inartificial manner, which, no doubt you may have seen used by chambermaids who are chary of their labour, namely, by sticking a fresh candle into the socket which still contains the smoking half-extinguished remains of its predecessor, trusting to the remaining heat for an amalgamation of their substance. Ever and anon, too, the Sheikh had recourse to his pipe — a tremendous long one, the bowl of which protruded beyond the range of the old carpet. The smoke appeared to have a powerful effect upon the salivary glands, as well as on the lungs of his Highness, producing a very copious and constant expectoration; regarding the disposal of which, he was so far from careful, that it was quite impossible for the servants, and even for some of the assembly, to escape this sort of defilement. Indeed, in this as well as many other respects, the Arabs are a most filthy people.

In one point this assembly differed from most Arabian meetings I had seen. They seemed to feel that they really were in the presence of their chief, for silence and comparative order was preserved. Scarcely a word was heard, although many talked together apart; and each individual as he entered, came in a respectful manner to pay his respects to the Sheikh before taking his place, and bade him "good evening" on leaving it. At one time two of his brothers entered, when all, including the Sheikh himself, rose up and remained standing till they had saluted him.

After an hour and a half's enjoyment of this agreeable society and pleasant converse, we received our letters and our leave. On our way to the boat the Meerza, who had followed us, and was pouring out a descant high upon the Sheikh's kindness and condescension, arrested our progress suddenly, and pointing with his hand to a small four-legged animal which stood by the way-side, exclaimed, "And look, here is a horse which his Highness presents, and desires your acceptance of." Taken by surprise, I could only make the usual reply, "May the Sheikh's favour never diminish. But as to the horse," continued I, "what am I to do with it here, where I have too many already." While uttering these words, I cast my eyes upon the Sheikh's donation. I had, in fact, observed at the door of the inclosure a small ill-favoured *yahoo*, which I supposed to belong to some of the servants, and was now not less amused than astonished to find that this was the identical animal which the Sheikh of the noble

tribe of the Montefics had destined as a present to be *divided* between my companion and myself. The moon shone bright as day, so that I had the full means of comprehending the extent of his bounty. It was a beast I should have been ashamed to see among my servants — small, lean, ragged, and galled; like a cast muleteer's drudge. I looked at it, and then at the Meerza, with a significant air, as much as to say, "A pretty concern it is!" but said with my lips, "Meerza, this is all very well; but as we have no means of taking care of more horses, I must just leave this one here. It is all one, you know; the Sheikh's property is ours, and ours is the Sheikh's, so we shall just commit this horse of ours here to his care."

"No, no, no!" replied the Meerza, "that won't do at all; the Sheikh would be much displeased. It is his custom always to bestow a *khelùt* on those who bring him presents; to persons of your rank he gives a horse, so take it you must."

"As to the Sheikh's customs, Meerza," said I, "they are not binding upon us; we did not come here to get a horse, but to see the Sheikh of the Montefic; to place in his hands certain presents of courtèsy from the English Bâleoos Beg (Resident), and to pay him a friendly visit on our own parts. If the Shiekh considers it requisite for his own character to mark his friendship for the Bâleoos Beg, or for ourselves, by the present of a horse, it is well; but it is not our custom to receive such presents without returning an equivalent. We are travellers, unprovided with anything fitting to return for

such horses as the Sheikh of the Montefic *should* give, and therefore cannot receive any. As for such a creature as this to be divided among two of us, it looks more like an affront than a compliment—to receive it is out of the question; and it will not add to the good name or credit of the Sheikh to have made an offer of the sort—if, indeed, it be not some trick of his servants, which I very much suspect. We can neither receive this brute, nor anything else upon this occasion."

A vast deal of altercation now took place between the Meerza and the man who brought the horse, and repeated attempts were made to change my resolution; but we resisted them all with some show of indignation, and the affair ended in the horse being left, and the Meerza returning in some perplexity, to report, as he said, what had taken place, to the Sheikh; while we crossed the river to take a cup of coffee with our friend the goomrookchee before going to bed.

On the 13th in the morning, we rose as usual on marching days, and were busy loading, when our friend the Meerza came up once more, puffing and blowing with fat and zeal, and begging us, for Heaven's sake, not to think of starting till the Sheikh was up, as he had ordered two fine horses, one a-piece, for us, which we must wait for and accept, without further demur, as otherwise, his Highness might be much displeased. We had heard this morning, that the whole was a trick of this very gentleman's. He was desired, we were informed, to provide *two* horses, but thinking the opportunity

for making a trifle too good to be missed, he got this sorry *yahoo* from a friend and palmed it on us as the Sheikh's present. So you may be sure we now laughed at him, and soon after started for Arjah, a reed village on the river side, which was to be our first stage homewards.

On inquiring into the matter of guides, I found that the magnificent offer of six horsemen had, in fact, come down, as I before mentioned, to the same old guides, who, one and all, were ready enough to return just as they came; nay, so attractive did our party prove that, even a boy, who had, as we imagined, only taken our convoy to Sook-u-Shiookh on his own affairs, was found this day at our stirrup on his way back to the Zobeid. In fact, these fellows, having nothing to do at home, are sometimes glad of an excuse for a little gadding; and the smallest pretence will suffice. It is just "anywhere and back again," with them; and the hopes of getting a handkerchief or a spear half a *shaumie* (a shilling) cheaper, would induce them to go from their camp all the way to Hillah or Sook-u-Shiookh: it costs them nothing but time, which is of no value; their horses and themselves are at free quarters wherever they go; and as for the discomforts of a journey, they feel it not,—it is much the same as at home. The Sheikh had, however, been persuaded, it seems, to send a man to see us safe across the river; this was the amount of guidance and assistance furnished by him.

We reached Arjah soon enough; it being not above twelve or fourteen miles distant from Koote,

and the road being good. Our host, who was a Sheikh, and a cousin of the great man, when he saw our company, and supposed that the cost of entertaining us was to fall on him, took alarm and tried to induce us to go further up the river, assuring us we should meet with plenty of Arabs to lodge with nearer the place of crossing; but no sooner was it intimated to him that a present might be expected, than the tune was changed, and we were accommodated with all we required. While sitting at this gentleman's fire, we spied two horsemen coming up to the camp, and were informed that they were riding the horses which the Sheikh had selected for us, and sent after us on hearing of our departure. On casting our eyes on them, one proved to be the very rejected yaboo of the preceding evening, and the other a quadruped of the self-same description; neither was worth ten shillings. It was a very annoying business, as having been sent after us by the Sheikh, it might be taken as an affront should we return them. I proposed to give them to the people who brought them, as to take them with us was impossible; but the men told us that to accept them, or to take them back at all, was as much as their heads were worth. Their orders were to follow me till they found me, and place them in my hands, should they even have to go to Baghdad for the purpose.

Still we declared that to take them with us was out of the question, and I appealed to the assembly round me, the Sheikh's cousin included, whether

I should not more consult that chief's honour by leaving his horses than by taking them with me. "What would be said of the Sheikh Montefic in Baghdad," I asked, "were we to enter that city mounted on such animals, and show them as the gift of that great Arab chief? would they exalt his name?" I must do them the justice to say that every man of the company agreed with me, and hung his head in shame at the transaction; but the two messengers still entreated me, to consider their safety, and not to expose them to the Sheikh's anger, as they could not possibly return to his presence with their faces so blackened. So I compromised the matter by writing a letter to the Sheikh, acknowledging the receipt of his horses; but requesting permission to leave his bounty in his care, as I had not people enough to take care of the horses I already possessed. I trusted to rumour to do the rest, and put this great Arab chieftain to shame, if he were susceptible of such a sensation, and thus ended my intercourse with this mighty personage, the *Sheikh-ul-Mushaeekh*, or Sheikh of Sheikhs, as he is termed in letters addressed to him by the government, giving us a fair ground to estimate the value of Arab liberality, as well as their hospitality, in these degenerate days; for I ascertained that there was no trick of servants in the case; the Sheikh had, with his own eyes, seen the beasts and approved of them; thus, whatever may have been the Meerza's part in the shabby transaction, the disgrace of it fairly lies at his master's door.

The rest of the day passed pleasantly enough: we went out with our guns to get a dinner, and I never saw so many black partridges. Had I been in my shooting-jacket, I should have bagged eight or ten brace, I am persuaded; but the Arab costume is unfavourable to free action, at least to an unpractised stranger, and so I only got a few, which gave us a luxurious dinner for the morrow; that of the passing day was dressed and served from the kitchen of the Sheikh; and, together with food for horses and servants, was paid as regularly as if furnished from a hotel in Europe: the present, indeed, was given to the servants, but it was immediately taken possession of by the right owners.

LETTER VI.

Recross the Euphrates.—An Instance of Oppression.—Sunkhera.—Workha.—Marashedieh Arabs.—A characteristic Meal.—A Sleepless Night.—Til-Eide.—Vast Mounds, and Ancient Vestiges.—Guttubeh.—Camp of the Toghiah Arabs.—Sites.—Bivouac.—Great Cold.—Miss the Sheikh Zobeid's Camp, and fall in with that of the Shummur.—Bad Conduct of our Guides, and Extortion of our Hosts.—Obliged to retrace our way Southward to the Sheikh's Camp.—Sad Confusion and Want there.—More Trouble about Guides.—Reach Shamlee.—Zibliyeh.—Moollah Allee's Simplicity.—Moving Sand-hills.—Course to Mahawil.—Arrive at Baghdad.

On the morning of the 14th, we were on foot by half-past seven; and after a sad work of wading and threading our way among *hores* and water-ruts, got into our old track, which led us precisely to the same spot upon the river's bank, at which we crossed before. Our guide had preceded us, in order to prepare a boat, and we were disappointed at finding him produce two small canoes, which, as it seemed to us, were so slight that the least jerk of a horse, even while in the water, would upset them. One of them, indeed, had a great gap out of its side, which was patched with no more solid material than mud, and both were fabricated only out of straw and bitumen; yet such was their buoyancy, that they crossed and recrossed much faster than

the larger boat would have done, and thus, though fewer horses could be towed over at a time, we actually got the whole across in less time than on the former occasion, and, thank Heaven, without accident. I had, indeed, another charge which gave me some anxiety, in a beautiful colt I had purchased to fulfil a commission, and which I was most desirous to get safe to Baghdad; but the creature, though only two years old, swam beautifully, and all passed off to my wish. We were just two hours in effecting the passage; and resuming our march, we rode on till about four o'clock, when meeting a camp of mingled roving and Mâdan Arabs, we came-to for the night, after a journey of about twenty-two miles.

The history of the colt I have just alluded to, affords a specimen of the oppression which may exist even in a community of free and independent Arabs. The tribe of Montefic are the great suppliers of the best Arab horses for the Indian markets, and so large had been the supply sent to Bombay during the last two previous years, that we could not find for sale an animal fit to look at, far less to suit for the commission I had it in charge to fulfil; But when our friend, the goomrookchee, heard of my desire, he told me with some degree of mystery, that he had a beast which he was sure must suit me, if he were but old enough, for that he was indeed a *horse* (emphatically), though only two years old. The beauty of the creature and its extreme and playful docility, for it had been brought up like a pet dog in the family tent, left nothing to be

desired, nor was its price at all extravagant, indeed it was so small as to strike me with surprise. It appeared, however, that the honest goomrookchee was glad to get anything for his pet, for the Sheikh had been collecting, in a very summary way, all the best horses he could find; and it was said had got wind of this one, which, had he demanded it, the goomrookchee was too much in his power to refuse; so he was glad to touch a good sum of cash in hand, rather than run the risk of losing colt and price and all.

As we alighted at the camp this night, an old woman brought a young infant in her arms, and passed it three times under the belly of one of our horses. We were told that it was regarded as lucky to do so with a horse of a stranger guest. Our host this night warned us to look sharp after our property, as the Mâdan part of the camp were by no means scrupulous in point of honesty. I heard that these, in turn, retorted on the rovers; but it was clearly our part to keep a good look out, which we did, particularly over the precious young colt. Fortunately, we had no loss to complain of.

Jan. 15.—We were on horseback by a quarter past seven, and held a course somewhat to the west of north till noon, when we reached Sunkhera; a mound from fifty to sixty feet high, obviously of great antiquity, and built, as it seemed, of fire-baked bricks of the coarser kind. We saw none fine, nor any with arrow-headed characters; but there were quantities of broken pottery, flints, agate, and cornelian fragments and scoriæ. I observed no glass,

but picked up several bits of copper extremely corroded. The mound is one of a number forming a sort of circle, all of which exhibit similar appearances, and in some the bricks are more entire. Many of these bricks were fourteen inches square. I cannot say that we saw any sun-dried bricks; but there was much mud or earth which probably was formed of their débris. In several parts of this circle were traces of the foundations of buildings, squares of houses and courts, but all level with the earth, and of no considerable thickness. On one of the heaps, too, we observed a number of bricks put together, as it appeared, without mortar or any sort of cement. I suspect, however, that all this is modern; that is to say, Mahomedan; but the site itself has every appearance of antiquity. Taking the space both without and within this circuit, the whole was considerably more than a mile across. The ground around it was very unequal, with many heights and hollows; but whether these represented the sites of former buildings or not, I cannot say.

From hence we held right north for a clump or two of date-trees, which we remembered having seen from our former line of route, and believed to be on the river's bank, but which we now found to be about the head of the water we crossed on the 7th. On approaching them we found plenty of Mâdan Arabs, and saw that this part of the country had formerly, and at no very distant period, been well cultivated and populous. The remains of many date-gardens were scattered over an extent of more than three miles and a half, and the whole surface of

the land still showed the ridges of the rice-grounds which had not long ago existed here. We traversed this abandoned cultivation, crossing the head of the water-course which had so much embarrassed us, until about three o'clock we saw Arabs a-head; and after passing some camps, took up our quarters with a small group of Marashedieh Arabs, who received us kindly, and provided us and our people with a good dinner. I should have said, that two hours previous to reaching this camp, we passed another lofty mound, and observed Workha, also on our left, about three and a half hours W. by N. from Sunkhera. Our march to-day was not less than one hundred and twelve miles.

These Arabs are truly a rude and unkempt set. While dinner was preparing, one of our old guides came to the fire of brush-wood at which we were sitting, having a great piece of the ribs and flap of the sheep which had been killed for us, raw and bloody, in his hand. This he threw like a log upon the embers, covering it over with others scraped together —waited for fifteen or twenty minutes till it was well scorched, then threw it on a hedge of brushwood for a few minutes until the sun should set, — for it was still Ramazan, and he was pretending to keep his fast—and then clutching a handful of mashed dates, consisting one-half of dirt, in a broken wooden dish, he tore the meat, half-raw, half-burnt, rib from rib, and ate it, covered as it was with ashes, tossing in a great lump of dates at every other mouthful. It was just such a meal as a hungry cannibal would have made, or a Caffree, or wild

Boshieman; it was a mingling of what is told of the feasts of the Esquimaux and the Abyssinians. When nearly finished, he threw some of the half-picked ribs with a handful of dates, to the guide who had come with us from the last stage — a lean, miserable, hungry-looking biped, who sat watching him, as you have seen a dog do his master at dinner. Short work did the creature make of the fragments — never were bones more thoroughly polished — never did the said hungry dog gnaw them more assiduously.

Jan. 16.—A dismal cold night ushered in a desperate morning—a bitter north-wester exasperated a hard frost: it was no wonder the people could not be got to start early. Nor were we ourselves much refreshed by sleep: the sheep of the Arabs were gathered around our tent, and the dogs were watching outside of them: they kept up such a barking, that to sleep was impossible. One, an old worn-out superannuated cur, labouring under a desperate sore-throat, established itself on the outside of our tent just by my pillow, where, unable to perform its duty by honest barking, it worked hard to redeem itself, in its own opinion, by maintaining a constant snarling growl, swelling occasionally into a hoarse grunt, which seemed so habitual, that it continued it even in its sleep; and to dislodge it was impossible, without risking the doing battle with the whole canine forces of the camp.

It was half-past seven before we were in the saddle, and even then were detained by the breakfast arrangements of our guides. A wretched cold ride

we had through tamarisk jungle, alongside of our old friend the Shut-ul-kâr. In about an hour we reached a number of high continuous mounds, which at first I believed to be natural, but afterwards I was led to suspect they might be the remains of the walls and buildings of an immense old place, which we soon after reached. From one of the loftiest of these mounds, we saw a sharp, insulated, lofty ruin, called by the Arabs, Ul-Eed, or Til-Eed; the ground around it was rough, as if covered with vestiges of old sites.

Our guides then pointed out a building some two or three miles distant, as we thought, which they told us was very ancient, and not much out of our way, so we allowed the baggage and cattle to go on and went to see it. It proved to be, at least, five or six miles distant, and we rode to it the whole way, over mounds and flats, strewed with the usual débris of the most ancient sites. Glass of several colours was particularly abundant, but chiefly of green. The building proved to be the remains of a very large bastion, formed of sun-burned brick; in structure exactly like the Mujellibah, having layers of reeds between each tier of bricks. The bricks were large and thick, exactly like those of that remarkable ruin. The building, or bastion, had split into four parts; each rent reaching to the base of what remains of the building, above the mound on which it stands, so that you may enter by them. Whether the structure was hollow or solid, I cannot say. It may have been the former, and the centre partly filled up with débris from above — it may have been

the latter, and the centre washed out by the rains of centuries. Including the heap, or mound on which it stands, and which, no doubt, has been formed by its own *débris,* it stands full fifty feet above the plain — the building itself comprising half that height.

This bastion formed, apparently, the north-east corner of the place we had ridden over, and which originally must have been a square of from five to six miles each side; but it was impossible to judge correctly, as we only saw the east and north sides, which were distinctly traceable by heaps and fragments, and at right angles to each other. Whether the mounds first mentioned this day as being like natural ones, formed part of this enormous old place or not, I venture not to say; we saw no broken tiles or potsherds on them, though these were plentiful in other parts. But then, if they were the walls, and formed of sun-dried bricks, the mouldering earth of these might have covered such fragments. On the other hand, although the mounds in question were abrupt enough on the southern side, I could discover no signs of building: perhaps part may have been natural, part artificial; yet how mounds of solid loam, from twenty to thirty feet high above the surface, could be naturally formed in an alluvial country like this, let geologists say.

We continued in a course almost due west along the north wall for more than an hour—certainly for nearly five miles—to join our servants, who had proceeded nearly north from where we quitted them, and had gone slower than we. There was much of that bare baked earth, which indicates former

building, to the north as well as to the south of the wall; and the whole was thickly sprinkled with the usual relics, particularly glass, and there were here and there great slabs of the slag stone observed so abundantly at Iskhuriah. The greater part of the whole area was bare, and there were plenty of Arabs encamped upon it. Beyond what we took to be the north-west corner, there ran a long line of mounds, a very little to the west of north, for about three miles; and, in pursuing a similar direction, we crossed a range of hillocks running east and west, from the top of which extensive ruins were seen stretching westward. For this wide district of ruins, far surpassing in extent anything we have seen since quitting Babylon, we could find no name; the Arabs call the country Guttubeh.

From hence, crossing a river bed, which I believe to have been the Kâr again, we passed through a thick belt of tamarisks, of which we had seen a good many to-day; and passing several camps and through large droves of camels, reached a tract of higher ground covered with the tents of the Jesham and Toghiah Arabs. At the tent of the Sheikh of the latter tribe, at about half-past two P.M., we came-to for the night, our course having been on the whole a little to the west of north, and the distance gone about twenty-five miles. It was a severe march, however; for the wind continued so bitter all day, that our Arabs were quite knocked up by it, and were every now and then stopping to light a fire and warm themselves. The Sheikh, rather a respectable-looking man, received us more hospitably than we

had been accustomed to, and warmed us with good coffee, and supplied us with all we could desire. But we found his people sad rogues, and detected one of them in an attempt to rob the Doctor—indeed, the Sheikh himself, seeing our things lying carelessly about at first, came up and remonstrated, saying that if we were so careless, he would not be responsible for our property; his people, he said, were but men, and had best not be too far tempted. We took his hint, and looked sharper after our goods.

January 17.—Another cold night. The morning was but a shade less numbing than that of yesterday—the wind one degree less violent; yet we did not get off till half-past seven. Strange primitive ways these Arabs have, to be sure. All the space before the tent was, as usual, covered with sheep and cattle, which took such liberties with our tent ropes that I every moment expected to have the fragile tenement down about our ears. The Sheikh's tent was divided into two parts—one for the women; the other, the hall of audience, for the men. The lambs slept with the women; the hall of audience, where we had been received the evening before on very decent carpets, was filled during the night with calves and young heifers that made a pretty place of it before morning. Our tent being struck, we purposed spreading a carpet there, on which to eat our breakfast before starting; but we could with difficulty get a decent corner, and scarcely had we begun to eat when the said heifers made a rush upon us, and some of the calves saluted us in a manner that forced us to change our quarters. The Arabs only laughed at the interruption.

Almost immediately on leaving the camp we entered a *horc*, one of the roughest I remember to have ever crossed. In about two hours and a half we reached the grounds of some Mâdan Arabs, where we watered our cattle and filled the *matâras* (leathern bottles), having heard that we should find no more water till we reached the Zobeid. From hence we proceeded north by west, passing some large mounds and extensive sites, with all the débris common to the oldest. Glass was exceedingly abundant, and sepulchral vases and earthenware coffins, both round and oblong, were seen protruding from the ground everywhere; several appeared to have been recently broken; and beside one of these I picked up a human front tooth, the only one whole of several that had been thrown out; but the enamel soon split into strips and the whole tooth fell to pieces.

We passed to-day at least four important sites; and the ground all the way between them was covered with broken tiles, pottery, and glass. We also crossed a considerable tract of sandhills; the sand is obviously drifted by the wind, but whence it comes I cannot say. Much of our way was over a desert with scarcely a single bush; but towards evening we reached a tract covered with camel-thorn and the usual desert vegetation, and sprinkled with tamarisk bushes; so about half-past four P.M., we came-to for the night under the lee of a tamarisk thicket, after making a march of nine hours, or full thirty-two miles. The servants had been so profuse of the water, or so careless with the matâras, that not a drop of water was left except

a little for tea; and Seyed Hindee had shot a hare, which he grilled for us on the fire *à l'Arabe*, and the cook got up a dish of kid and rice for us, which, washed down with our capital tea, sent us comfortably to bed. Our people paid for their carelessness by having nothing at all to drink.

January 18. The coldest night and coldest morning of all. Long before the hour of call, my feet were so benumbed that I was glad to get up—we were on horseback by twenty minutes to seven. Such is the stimulating effect of discomfort, of cold and thirst; for doubtless it was the desire of getting to inhabited regions that made our people so unusually alert. On quitting our ground, some of the Arabs observed the foot-prints of a lion; but whether we had been in reality visited by his forest majesty during the night, or that those traces were antecedent to our arrival at the bivouac, is uncertain; at all events, he did us no harm.

So intensely cold was it when we started that we were forced to walk a great deal to keep up the circulation, and to dismount more than once for the same purpose, after trying to sit on horseback. The wind was of that low but heavy sort, loaded with spicula of cold, which penetrated every limb and joint—one might have fancied it the breath from a huge mouth of ice—till nine o'clock my mustachios remained frozen into one solid mass. We kept a N.N.W. course until we got upon the ground of our former route, and recognised the spot where we had been alarmed by sight of the camel-men, and next the place where we had passed the first night

after quitting the camp of the Zobeid. We then bent our course more to the northward, the guides thinking that the Sheikh Zobeid might have changed his ground, and we proceeded in great uncertainty till towards one o'clock, when, from the top of a mound, we saw camels and descried Iskhuriah, the place we visited from the Zobeid camp.

Pushing on for these, we learned from some shepherds that the Sheikh Zobeid was *behind* us; that the camels we saw belonged to the Shummur (Jerboah) who had taken up the Zobeid's ground. On this the guides wished us to turn back; but a horseman who came up at the moment, told us *he* had been looking all day in vain in that direction for the camp; so they at length agreed to follow us to the tents of the Shummur, who, though not enjoying a very high character, received us civilly. The accidental arrival of the camel-keepers, with whom we had spent the first night after quitting *Al-Heimer*, and who spoke well of us as pay-masters, completed the disposition in our favour; but we had soon good reason to suspect their honesty as well as their conscience in the matter of making charges, which the sequel did not belie.

In the mean time we were to have a dispute with our guides—everywhere a troublesome class of people, and particularly so in these parts. No sooner were we settled in our quarters, than they came and told us they must leave us; that their orders were to carry us to the Sheikh Zobeid, and this they were still ready to do, but not go amongst the Shummur; they dared not do so, they averred, without the

Sheikh's order. This was a view of the matter which did not suit us at all; our object was to get to Baghdad as soon as possible, and to go back to the Sheikh's camp would now be just so much out of our way, a thing we were resolved not to submit to. A discussion, therefore, arose on the subject, to which my reply was brief: they had undertaken, certainly, to guide us from the Montefic to the Zobeid—they had made an error in hitting the camp of the Sheikh; but were we to be the losers for their mistake?—certainly not; on the contrary, we expected them to conduct us *clear* of the Sheikh Zobeid's country, and that country extends to Baghdad. This I adhered to, and assured them *I* should not take my hand from the Sheikh's skirt, nor free them from responsibility until this should have been done. The Sheikh's honour was implicated in the affair, and they must beware how they compromised it.

After a good hour's *palaver*, the guides replied that *both* of them would accompany us, provided we would pay them their reward to this point, as if the service for which they had engaged had been fully performed, and that what was to come should be separately considered. The murder was thus out—it was greediness that had stood in the way; but our host was hungry too, and now proffered to guide us to Baghdad himself. The extent of his appetite might be measured by the price he demanded for a very sorry sheep—just three times that of the dearest we had yet purchased among any of the Arabs: and the character of our hosts was revealed by themselves in a conversation overheard by one of

our people. "What a pity it was," said they, "that they had not had intimation of our approach; they might in that case have ridden out to meet and strip us ere we came; but now, what use to think of such a thing!—we were guests, and they could do nothing to us!" Pleasant speculations these to learn, knowing ourselves entirely in their power!

January 19.—"Man proposeth," saith the proverb, "but God disposeth;" and certainly in a journey among Arabs, no one should count upon what he may do to-morrow. I was not without secret misgivings about the arrangements of the previous evening; and sure enough my presentiments were borne out by the event. In the morning when ready to proceed, our guides came forward and demanded their pay, or rather present, thus far, before they should start with us. I well knew that were this demand complied with, there would not be a chance of getting them to go on with us to Baghdad, so I positively refused to comply; a measure which called forth a world of altercation, but I stuck to my point, and so did they; for they swore they would not go without it. On this I called to our Shummur host to come according to his own offer, and leave the others to their meditations; but he, probably from some private understanding with them, took the same tone, and declared that *he* would not not move a step until he saw the others satisfied. This was an awkward dilemma; nor could we be certain that there was not in the matter some deeper treason than met the eye or ear; so there was but one way to act—any attempt to proceed to

Baghdad without a guide would have been but to abandon ourselves to robbery and plunder; we were still as yet under the eye of the Sheikh Zobeid, and from him only could we be sure of obtaining the protection and guidance we stood in need of. To him, therefore, we resolved to go, whether guided or not, for the mere intimation of this intention would prove a safeguard, if it did not force our recusant guides into the performance of their engagement; while we made no doubt of seeing them punished by the Sheikh for their misconduct.

Off we set, therefore, in the direction which had been pointed out to us the day before, our guides following us sulky and useless: and, falling in with some camel-men who were going also to camp, we were prevented from going far astray; but our luck in meeting this same Sheikh was fated from the first to be bad. When we arrived at the spot where the camp had been, we found he had just loaded his camels and departed for another place—so here were we, by the wickedness of our guides, forced to go a full day's march backwards, and to reach a point at least two days' distance from Baghdad, just when we should have been entering that city. String after string of camels did we pass, and group after group of tents did we leave behind us, and noon had passed, and another hour had gone by, and still we were told the Sheikh was a-head. Arabs, of all people, are the worst to gain local information from: if you ask where such a place is, they will tell you "just a-head," with a significant movement of their own head towards the quarter meant to be indicated;

nor will any cross-questioning elicit further or a more precise reply. On this occasion the indicial member was protruded to different quarters by different persons, and it was not without the greatest difficulty and abundant uneasiness and trouble that, about half-past two in the afternoon, we at length saw the white tent of the Sheikh, half-pitched, fluttering in the wind on the verge of the horizon. Towards it, however, we now pressed with vigour, and were received by Sheikh Hameed with perfect cordiality.

We found the camp in a miserable condition, however, in regard to comfort. The Sheikh himself was sitting on a black rug, without a drop of water to give us, tents not yet pitched, no bread, no meat, no wood, nothing whatever to be had, worse than at our first visit. It was near sunset when some meat, butter, and rice, were sent us; but neither wood nor water to cook it with. In another hour a small skin of the latter arrived, with a caution to make the best use we could of it, as we could get no more; as for the servants, all they could get were a few dates and a little bread, scarce enough to stay their hungry stomachs—it was a miserable business. The only thing in plenty was barley, and of that they sent enough to feed the beasts; but they had to go some seven or eight miles to water.

We sent word to the Sheikh that, if he pleased, we should be glad to dine with him, rather than alone; but found that he and his party were breaking their fast on dates fried in butter, and bread; probably they did not wish us to be witnesses of their

fare, whether good or bad, so we did the best we could on dates and bread, with a little *kebaubed* mutton, which, with a dish of tea, were quite enough for us. The Sheikh himself came to our tent while we were at dinner, and drank tea and coffee with us, and was as civil and polite as possible. We mentioned to him the conduct of the guides; but he told us they were not of his tribe, and that he had only employed them from their being connected with the tribes down the country; so all he said to them was, that they might go to the devil their own way, out of his sight. So they forfeited his favour and our coin, which we thought was but a slight punishment for the embarrassment and annoyance they had caused us; for now, it appeared, we must take the way round by Mahâwil, and the Hillah road, instead of by the Tigris. I suppose the Zobeid do not wish to have anything to do with the Jerboah, who, though beaten by the Aneiza, are still a more powerful tribe than themselves. So the Sheikh promises us a guide, and we start to-morrow; we shall see how it turns out—hitherto we have been sadly unfortunate in this camp.

January 20.—My malison on all Arabs and Sheikhs, jointly and severally, for a set of miserable wretches! They hospitable! they liberal! The words of Burns, *mutato nomine*, describe their country exactly.

> "There 's nothing here but *Arab* pride,
> And *Arab* dirt and hunger;
> If Heaven it was that sent us here,
> It sure was in an anger!"

Water is far off certainly, but one might have thought the Sheikh would have been able to afford a sufficiency for his guest at least: but no; beyond the miserable skin sent us last night, little was to be had, although the Sheikh himself told his servants, for God's sake, to go from tent to tent to search for a little. He had promised my servants a good repast at midnight, but it never arrived, and they went to bed, as I feared they would, with empty stomachs: they have truly fared ill for these several days past.

Next, as to the guide: we had made the Sheikh two requests on this point; first, that the man might be appointed and sent us this night, as otherwise, on the morrow, he would be sleeping when we should be starting; next, that the man so appointed, should be a Zobeid, and not of any other tribe. These things he promised "on his head," before he left us; yet, after all, who should he appoint but the very Jerboah rascal who had taken part with our old guides on the preceding day, and whom I had especially stipulated with the Sheikh might *not* be sent with us. This promised ill for our progress, and we augured still worse when we heard this same guide inquiring of every one which was the way, and confessing he had never been at *Shâmlee*, our intended resting-place for the night: but there was no help for it, as the Sheikh would certainly not be awake before noon, and that would make us quite too late for Shâmlee. So, putting our trust in Providence, on we fared.

We made it out better than there was reason to

hope for, under all circumstances. Some horsemen were found to have preceded us, and until we came upon their tracks I had the comfort of seeing our guide assume a steady demeanour. He took his course, and never deviated an inch from it; and after we fell in with the tracks, all became easy, though we had not the comfort of feeling confidence until, from a high mound, we saw the old khân of Shâmlee, scarcely five miles ahead. In two hours more we were comfortably housed in our little tent, behind the huts of Moollah Allee, an officer of the Zobeid Sheikh, who had the charge of a cultivating branch of the tribe living at this place. Here we had the comfort of plenty of water; a luxury which our horses shared, much to their satisfaction, poor creatures! as we knew they had tasted none for thirty hours. We were exactly eight hours on the road; and as we went, all the time, at a round pace, our march could not be less than thirty-two miles, on a course of W.N.W.

Our route, this day, lay over one continued chain of sites. No sooner had we passed one series of mounds than another appeared; and not a yard of ground was free from potsherds and glass. The most remarkable object was a group which, with the relique-covered surface belonging to it, covered many miles of ground. Of the visible ruins the chief were four high pyramidal mounds rising quite abruptly from the surrounding earth; but from a corner of one of them appeared part of a building, certainly of sun-dried brick. Their height might be from forty to fifty feet; but apart, from three

to four miles distant, their stood a still more imposing object. It was a sort of tower or bastion-shaped building, rising from the top of a mound of ruins, to the height of seventy or eighty feet in all. The exterior of this building was of sun-dried brick, exactly similar to the Mujellibeh, and like it pierced with holes through the building; but the interior has been formed of furnace-baked bricks, built with mortar like those of the Birs and other such ruins. We could trace the walls in one part; and there were plenty of bricks displaced, mingled with the dust on the top. The sun-dried brickwork was deeply furrowed by the rain, and had obviously furnished the matter of the hillock which is at their foot;—singularly enough, we found on the top of this mound a human skull, bleached white and bare, but evidently modern.

It is to be remarked that this ruin, like the Birs, Um-Ghyer, and others, has its faces turned to the cardinal points. The Arabs gave it the name of *Zibliyeh*, and they also gave a trivial name to each of the smaller pyramidal heaps.

Just beyond this place, a mile to the westward, we crossed the bed of a very large elevated canal, running about north and south, and three or four others of less dimensions, immediately after; indeed, between this place and our *munzil*, the ground appears to have been formerly quite cut up by these channels of irrigation. Not far from the largest canal there was another remarkable ruin; a square, of a third of a mile or more on the side, inclosed by a double wall of mud, still very high—in some

places full forty feet; but we could see no building in any part of it. The Arabs called it *Deher*.

Our hosts of this night were wonderfully and amusingly ignorant. My servant asked for candles, or *fat*, to burn in their room, as is usual, in a lamp for the purpose, but could not make them understand what was wanted. Having found a piece of fat, which was solid and white, Moollah Allee watched the servant as he was cutting it into the burner, and exclaimed, "Ah, I understand — that is a thing for making tea — I have seen one with Sheikh Waddee." "Yes," replied the servant, who was a bit of a wag, "it is just so; and see, here is the sugar," giving him a bit of the fat. The Arab took it and put it into his mouth. "Ah, no," said he, making a wry face, "you are cheating me; this is not sugar."

January 21. — Last night, or rather this morning, we had the pleasant variety of a shower of rain, which tried our frail tent, though we were more frightened than hurt. The tent, however, got very heavy. We were on horseback by half-past seven, and held on at first N.N.W. but soon turned more to the westward, till we got into a tolerably well-trodden track which carried us very near the river. I thought the guide was taking us, for his own purposes, nearer to Hillah than was necessary, and, upon my remonstrating, he struck into the desert in a line right for the village Iskunderiah, a measure which soon entangled us in a wide tract of sandhills, that were actually in motion under the action of a strong southerly wind, and from which,

after some danger and much difficulty, we were glad to escape back to the beaten road which skirts them: the surface of the sand was actually rolling like waves on a piece of water. There was a monstrous extent of them stretching away eastward, and the cloud of sand-dust raised from them by the wind made the atmosphere so thick that we could not see half a mile ahead. At length Al-Heimer hove in sight, on our left, and we then took our departure from it right for Mahâwil.

This day we passed many large antique canals, and, near Al-Heimer, several mounds just like the rest; indeed the whole country was covered thick with pottery, &c. It was worthy of observation, too that, as we rode along nearly in the line of what should have been the wall of Babylon, if Al-Heimer and Tueba are to be taken as the S.E. and N.E. corners, the vestiges of former habitations were more abundant on our right hand, that is *without* the supposed line, than on our left, which was within it, and that there was no continuous line of mounds at all to mark the traces of a wall. Both to-day and yesterday too, we passed through a great deal of cultivation, all belonging to the Zobeid Arabs. Observed on either hand several camps of Fellah Arabs, and whole squads of their squaws going for water—hideous wenches, with blue chins and lips, tattooed limbs, tattered garments, and each bearing on her head, folded up like a flat cap, the empty water-skin she was going to fill — truly sweet specimens they were of womankind!

At a quarter to five P.M., made the village of

Mahâwil, after just nine hours' march, which, as we rode quickly, gives fully thirty-six miles. We were well-received at the village, and entertained as guests of the Zobeid Sheikh, and the governor waited politely on us to make offer of his services.

January 22.—Our hosts were noisy, as Arabs are wont to be, and remained with us late from sheer politeness; a courtesy we could have dispensed with, as we had resolved to rise betimes in order to make one stretch for Baghdad. Accordingly, having roused our servants and got the horses fed by two in the morning, we were in the saddle an hour after, and left Mahâwil with a brilliant moon. In two hours we reached Nasseriyeh caravanserai, just where we did on our first unpropitious march across the Jezireh. A like time brought us to Iskunderieh, just at daylight, so that I could see to sketch the *Tuebah*, which is near that place. It is a small pyramidal mound not above thirty-five feet high above the plain, certainly of the same character and date as the Mujellibeh and such other mounds, as appears by the sun-dried brick-work and the débris. There are a great many mounds around it, all covered with fragments of brick and potsherds, but, as at the other end, there are more of these mounds without than within the line between it and Al-Heimer, and particularly three large ones stretching away in a N.W. direction.

It is unnecessary to mention the numerous canals we passed on this oft-described road, they were many and large; but the wind was bitter, and we rather thought of the rapidity with which we were

nearing Baghdad, than the obscure antiquities that we passed on the way. It is all desert like the rest; but charitable people have built caravanserais at every two hours' space along the line of road. From Mahâwil we passed these in succession, viz. Nasseriyeh, Iskunderieh, Bernous, Khanzadeh, and another in ruins. At Khanzadeh, which is but four hours from Baghdad, the Doctor and I quitted our people and baggage, and, trotting briskly on, found ourselves, soon after two o'clock in the afternoon, once more under the comfortable and hospitable roof of Colonel Taylor in Baghdad, a powerful contrast to the hard work and rude fare which had been our portion for the last month.

LETTER VII.

News, on our Arrival at Baghdad, from Persia.—State of that Country.—Expedition to Ager Kouf—its Height and Construction.—An Accident.—Preparations for returning homewards.

THE tidings which awaited us after our month's absence, were important and stirring enough to excite us, notwithstanding our desire for rest of mind and body.

It appears that Mahomed Meerza is now Mahomed Shah. The English envoy and Russian ambassador had urged him into action, and the former had advanced money to enable him to march at once upon Tehran. On his approach to that place, Allee Shah (the Zil-e-Sultaun, his paternal uncle,) had sent out an army to oppose him, but the soldiers, on approaching the young king's troops, seized their commanders and delivered them bound, into his hands. On learning this, the Zil fled to sanctuary at the shrine of Shah Abdulazeem, and sent word to his nephew that he was ready to renounce his pretensions to the throne, provided his life and a decent provision were secured to him. The former was promised: and we hear the new Shah entered Tehran, and obtained possession of the treasure of his grandfather, though woefully diminished.

The Firmaun Firmaee, (Prince of Fars,) having heard of these proceedings, retired to Sheerauz, from whence, it is affirmed, that he sent in his adhesion to the new Shah, and all things were subsiding into order and tranquillity in that quarter. The Buchtiarees, Lours, Feilees, and all the wandering tribes, were drawing in their horns; and even the Ben-i-Lâm, who had commenced a system of plunder had withdrawn,

> "As wintry waves from wasted lands
> Sweep back to ocean blue."

The Mahmoodsennee, or Mamasenni, a powerful tribe of robbers, in the neighbourhood of Cauzeroon, had been giving trouble; but the Firmaun Firmaee had sent his son Timour Meerza against them, who succeeded in defeating them and killing the son of their chief, Wullee Khan; on which they retired to their fortress, the Kallah Suffeed. But the Prince sent them word that they would gain nothing by this, as he was resolved to follow them, even to *hell.* And according to report, his movements must have been sufficiently energetic, for they sent him word that there was no need of more force — they were ready to obey his commands, and become good subjects. On this, Wullee Khan, the chief, was sent for and invested with all that district of country from Dalakee to beyond Cauzeroon, superseding the authority of the Eelkhanee, or Lord of the Eeleauts, a powerful chief, who had hitherto governed it, and who, accordingly, became the mortal enemy of the Prince and his family.

It appears that Mahomed Meerza (now Shah)

had sent his brother, Bahram Meerza, against Kermansha, who, in passing by Suleimaniah, had called upon Suleiman Pashah for his contingent. That the Pashah had marched with his Royal Highness to the frontier, when, pretending alarm on account of the Rewandooz Beg, he returned. He had even refused all assistance to Ismael Khan, an officer of the Azerbijan force, charged with the conveyance of some muskets sent for its use from India, and who, on his way from Baghdad to Tabreez, required carriage for his charge; so that that officer was left adrift with it somewhere upon the frontiers. Bahram Meerza had pushed on towards Kermanshah with a considerable force, and Mahomed Hoosein Meerza, the Prince, heretofore governor of that district, had taken sanctuary with the *Peish Numaz*, or head of the clergy at that place. It is said, Bahram Meerza has actually entered Kermanshah.

So far with regard to the affairs of Persia, which interest me intimately, both as pertaining directly to matters of duty, and as having an influence on my further movements. The internal politics of this Pashalic would be less intelligible to you, and little was to be made of them beyond a gradual progress in evil, and signs and tokens of the designs which Ibrahim Pashah and his father Allee, have upon this part of the Sultan's dominions.

You remember our affair with the Haitas at Hillah, who turned us out of our lodging there. The Resident had waited on the Pashah and stated the circumstances. His Highness was extremely indignant, and wrote instantly to the Beg of Hillah to

order the men who had been guilty of the insult, to be given up and duly and severely punished. *Some* of them *had* been found and severely *spoken to, (not punished,)* and warned against a repetition of such conduct — that was all. The fact is, that neither Governor nor Pashah venture to exercise the right of punishment at present — they cannot. The Haitas are masters of the place, and do as they like; plundering and pillaging, and insulting all those who are not of their party; and they will continue to do so, no doubt, until the arrival of the regular troops, (or Nizam,) who are expected, and then there will most likely be a row and a battle, which will terminate the business. The Pashah said as much to the Resident. "Only let the regular troops come, and, inshallah! we shall shave these fellows' beards!"

During the six days I remained at Baghdad, I did little more than reduce to form the information I had collected during my trip into the Jezeereh, and prepare for my return to Persia. The work of one day only merits notice, and that was a ride to Agerkouf, Akerkouf, or Minâr-e-Nimrood, as it is variously called; nor was the time thus occupied mispent. It is a very lofty building, constructed of raw bricks, like the rest of its class; but the quantity of fire-burned bricks scattered all around it prove clearly that at one time it must have had a *revêtement* of that material. Between the bricks there are layers of reeds, it is said, at every seventh tier; but I saw them indifferently at the fifth, sixth, and seventh; and, instead, a single layer crossed:

the reeds are in some places two inches thick; and so fresh are they, that the Doctor, having pulled down a brick or two, and thus exposed a parcel of the reeds, his horse began to eat them just as if they had been straw. At present, it presents the appearance of a tall amorphous mass, resting, as it were, upon an elevated base of the same materials as itself; the layers of reeds, which protrude from between the bricks on all sides, giving to the profile a serrated aspect as it cuts the sky. There is a window, at least an opening on the south side, about half way up, and a sort of hole, that looks as if it would lead to something, on the east. This last, however, is, I believe, nothing more important than a jackall's den; as for the other, it was entered with some difficulty by Captain Willock, I think, and Colonel Taylor's son, who found a small chamber; but the dust produced by an immense quantity of bats' dung under foot, and which they in vain attempted to clear away, prevented any discoveries; probably there was none to be made.

Dr. Ross remarked, that this mass must have been square, and that the sides, as usual, fronted the cardinal points: but the figure is now very imperfect. I have little doubt that it was just such a building as the rest of these singular and lofty edifices—a temple for the religious worship of that time. The most singular and imposing thing about Agerkouf is its height, which must be very great. An Italian surveyor, who took the height both of this and the Birs, I understand, found Agerkouf the highest of the two; but I should doubt the truth of this.

We found about the place an encampment of the Ben-i-Saeed Arabs, some fifty or sixty of the men of which were clustered round the base of the tower. A fellow, calling himself their Sheikh, came forward, and was very importunate for a present, which we very unceremoniously refused; but had they deemed it safe, I doubt not they would have tried to put the matter to issue. On the way home I had an adventure of another kind, which had nearly cost me a horse or two, and a double-barrelled pistol. In leading my own horse over the bridge of a canal, he put his foot through it, fell over into the water, and was carried under by the stream. After a good deal of plunging and struggling, and a complete sousing, he scrambled out; and then another horse played the same prank, and was rescued with still more difficulty. One of my pistols was thrown from the holster, and got so buried in the mud, that it was not till after an hour's paddling in the water that one of the servants found it.

The time had now arrived when I was to make the first step homewards, in my long pilgrimage, and you may believe the preparations for doing so are anything but irksome. But they require some time, and I must therefore now close in order to complete them. Adieu! My next will be dated from some point on my way to Tehran.

LETTER VIII.

Leave Baghdad.—Caravanserai Chôle.—Ferry over the Diala.—A bold Thief well trounced.—Bakoubah.—Supposed Site of Destaghird.—A furious Storm.—Sheherawân.—Khanakee.—Kasr-e-Shireen.—Eeliaut Robbers.—Mâdan Arabs near Zohâb.—Pool-e-Zohâb.—Pass and Town of Kerrend.—Haroonabad.—Reach Kermanshah.—The Vizier.—Solymaun Khan Gouraun—his House—the Palace—and Prince.

January 29th 1835.

At length, Dear ——, we have turned our backs upon the city of the Khalifs, with its venerable recollections, and present wretchedness, its relics of antiquity towering above its modern hovels, in spite of plague, inundation, and oppression; its shadow of a government, its pageant of a Pashah, and its Prætorian Haitas, its noisy squalid Arabs, its noble and beautiful river, disgraced by its bridge of shattered boats, and the ruinous walls reflected in its waters; in short, on modern Baghdad; and, but for the kind hospitality of the Resident and his excellent lady, and the comfort I had enjoyed in the society of the Residency, it would have been without a shadow of regret. In fact, as the last of my cattle crossed the bridge over the ditch at the Aathem-gate, at half-past seven o'clock of a fine, though cloudy morning, and as I felt the elastic

step of my horse as he bounded over the bare desert that stretches to its very walls, my heart did make a little bit of a bound too, and a prayer of thankfulness did escape it on the occasion, for was it not the first step, please God, of return to home and to all I hold dear on earth?

Our way to Bakoubah, our resting place nine hours distant, lay across this same dead flat, the only variety displayed at this season being the change from bare earth to the rank dry grass which occupies the morasses. Half way there is a caravanserai, built by some charitable individual for those travellers who may not be able to proceed the whole stage at once; and it has encouraged a settlement of some three or four families of most miserable Arabs who sell a few necessaries to these travellers and pilgrims—pilgrims, I say, emphatically, for this is the great route for pilgrims from Persia to Kerbelah, and the resort of these is immense. The caravanserai and its village are called *Chôle*, which, I suspect, means *Shôle* or *Showl*, that is desert. Nor could a more appropriate name have been devised, for a more perfect desert than that around it cannot be imagined. Yet, that all was once thickly inhabited and well-cultivated is proved, not only by the presence of the usual débris, but by abundance of canals which cross the way, or accompany the road in numbers. One of these, within about an hour of Bacoubah, was at least thirty yards in breadth; and still nearer that place we crossed the bed of the Nahrawân, the most important of the ancient canals on this side the Tigris, which was

from fifty to seventy yards broad; in fact, as large as the Euphrates in most places below Hillah.

Bacoubah is situated on the banks of the river Diala, here a fine rapid stream. We crossed it by the only well-regulated ferry I remembered to have seen in these countries. A large boat, constructed on purpose for cattle and horses, plies across, traversing upon a rope fixed on either side. The animals enter by means of a sort of brushwood pier built at the same points, which, though not very solid, answers the purpose sufficiently well; and the capacity of the boat was such as to take in the whole of my twelve beasts, along with their riders, at once; had they been the cattle of muleteers they would have been stowed still closer.

When we reached the side of the river, one of my servants began to roar out lustily to the Turks on the other side, desiring them to make haste and not to keep us waiting; a flourish of the imperative mood, which they received with true Turkish phlegm. "Softly, softly," growled one of them at last, "are you bringing a *head?*" Yet, surely, we could not complain of much delay, when from the time of our arrival on the brink of the river, to that of landing on the other shore, was scarcely eighteen minutes. I was so much pleased that I intended bestowing on the superintendent a handsome present; but he spoiled his own chance, by a most impudent demand of just *twelve times* the regular fare, and made it under pretence of its being a duty on merchants leviable at this place. My reply was, that I was no merchant, and paid no cus-

tom or duty; and throwing to the boatmen some coins, comprising four or five times their due, I rode away without hearing or speaking another word. The imperturbable phlegm of the two official Turks at this receipt of customs, was neither affected by our remonstrances against their unjust demand, or our subsequent retreat, which they never attempted to oppose.

I forgot to mention a specimen we had, this day, of the audacity of the petty thieves who infest the vicinity of Baghdad, and are the terror of foot-passengers and ass-drivers, whom they strip without mercy. A party of some five or six of these fellows, dressed like Arabs, and armed with bludgeons, had passed us on the road not far from Chôle; all but one of them went on their way; but on looking back I saw one of my people, who had lingered behind, in conversation with him who had stopped. In a moment or two I heard them at high words, and saw the fellow raise his stick to strike my servant, who, on his part; made a blow at the other with the butt-end of his gun. I instantly gallopped back to know what was the matter, and called to the fellow to desist; but so far was he from being daunted, that he turned, club in hand, upon myself. Another of the servants by that time coming up, struck him with a stick, and thus diverted his attention from me, which I was not sorry for: I had put my hand to one of my pistols, and might, in self-defence, have done that which I should have had reason to regret. But no sort of fear did the gentleman show on the occasion; on the contrary, he set

the whole of us at defiance, brandishing his stick at one and striking at another, as they came forward and tried to get a hit at him. Had the horses not shyed, as the riders pressed forward, the fellow would soon have had enough; but, frightened at his frantic gestures, they reared and jumped aside, and so prevented the blows from telling, and the man, had he been so disposed, might have possibly got clear off: on the contrary, he provoked the fight and stood his ground, till one of the horse-keepers, jumping from his mule, ran in and hit him a right down blow with a bludgeon, on which they closed and both came to the ground. The foolish fellow's chance was now ended,—the people rushed upon him, and beat and kicked him to his heart's content. No cat and dog hate each other worse than the Arabs and *Adjems* (Persians), and they never miss an opportunity of showing their mutual spite; but as the latter are the weaker party in these parts, so good a chance as the present seldom occurs, and was not, I assure you, lost; I was forced to interfere authoritatively to save his life, and had hard work to succeed.

On inquiring the cause of the fray, it appeared that the servant, who was first attacked, had overheard the man observing to his companions, in good Turkish, that the "Aga had passed on, so they might easily knock down and strip some of the laggers." He had taxed the man with this, and had received an impudent answer, which occasioned the fray: I know not if this was exactly the truth, but it is probable enough, and certainly

the fellow paid for his impudence; never did a poor wretch get a better drubbing; yet had all his comrades been as stout-hearted as he, we should have had enough to do, and probably blood might have been shed.

I cannot express to you the pleasure I felt at being now quit of Arab hospitality and all sorts of *mehmandaree*, and being once more at liberty to "take mine ease in my *caravanserai*," seeking and paying only for what was required—under obligation to no man. There was, indeed, a small attempt made on the part of the *Khânchee*, or hostel-keeper at Bacoubah, to make me his "guest," in the hope of reward; but I insisted on paying for every thing I took, and the charges were high enough; yet, after all, mine host was amazingly disappointed, he said, at not receiving a couple of ducats, or tomauns, for his "attentions."

The village itself was once large and flourishing; but, under the influence of plague and extortion, it is now little better than a heap of ruins, in a jungle of date and pomegranate-trees. I observed orange-trees, too, but the cold frosty wind of the preceding fortnight had given a desperate nip to their leaves, one half of which were already quite brown.

On the succeeding morning, the 30th, we started a little before seven, proceeding by a very winding path, crossing many old canals and modern water-courses, which perplexed us a good deal. The hills we were approaching were now plainly discovered, the tops of the highest being covered with snow.

In the course of this day's march, which was only twenty-eight miles long, the ancient city of Dustagird, the celebrated residence of Khosroo Purveez, is by some supposed to have been situated; but, though there were plenty of the usual vestiges of brick and pottery scattered everywhere over the surface, and in some places, fragments of buildings crossing the very road, with many ancient canals running in all quarters, I could not discover any mounds, or other remains, extensive enough to represent the site of so large and comparatively recently existing a city—for Khosroo lived in the seventh century, and his capital was taken and himself driven from it only A. D. 628. But, in truth, for better than the last half of the way, the wind, which had increased since morning, blew so furious a tempest and raised such clouds of dust, that our view was limited to a very small compass, nor did we see the date-trees of Sheherawan, our stage for the night, until within less than a mile of them. It was a bitter storm, and made the comforts of a good caravanserai doubly acceptable.

January 31.—The storm raged all night and terminated in a slight fall of rain; and the sky was so threatening when we rose, that the muleteers who had intended to accompany us, would not load, and I had some misgivings myself on the subject of quitting our shelter. In fact, just as we did leave the khân, a heavy plump came down; but I had resolved not to be arrested by anything short of extremity in the weather, on my way to Kermanshah; and as there was a caravanserai and village about twenty

miles on, I resolved to make that much of distance, at all events: so on we fared.

We got pretty well to Kizzil Robaut, and it was rather a pleasant ride after the rain; but soon after we left that place, some angry thunder-clouds gathered round, and gave us a fair sample of their contents — at one time the rain fell by pailfuls. We had to wind a good deal among canals, which, had the previous rain been heavier, would have proved serious obstacles from their mud; and in the course of the day's march we crossed at least three ranges of hills, or rather hillocks, many of which consisted entirely of gravel or the conglomerate from which it had been formed. One long broad ridge of red and grey sandstone, very soft and destructible, resembled some of the Hâmrine Hills, near Dellee-Abbas. Most of the pebbles belonging to the conglomerate were of jasper and porphyry of various colours.

In spite of the rain we pushed on, and reached the village of Khânekeen, when we could no longer see, and just in time to avoid a heavy storm of thunder and rain, which fell during the whole night. How I did congratulate myself and thank Providence for having permitted me to gain this shelter! for you can have no idea how perplexing to travellers in these countries is a heavy drenching. Beasts suffer as well as men, and the loads get so soaked that the mules can hardly carry what before was scarcely a burthen. We had, however, to ford a deep and swollen stream in the dark, just below what appeared to be a capital bridge, too, but which, like all things in this Pashalic, had been suffered

to go to decay: a flood had carried away one of the arches, and neither government nor individual has thought fit to repair it. The same might be remarked of the caravanserai; but it is a solid, though a modern building as well as the bridge, both being, as I believe, constructed by orders of the late Mahomed Allee Meerza, and the former, if no positive violence be offered it, may last for many years. That decay had already begun its approaches, however, became soon known by a caution given us on the part of its keeper. He told us that the Koordish thieves in the neighbourhood were in the habit of finding their way through holes and breaches in the walls during the night, and cautioned us to be on our guard against them. The warning was not superfluous: in the course of the night we were awakened by a shot fired within the building, succeeded by a great uproar; and, on inquiring, found that some of these thieves had actually stripped one of the mules belonging to a muleteer, and was carrying off his prize when discovered by the owner.

February 1.—In the morning, the yard of the khân was afloat with the rain that had fallen during the night, and which still fell; but in the course of half an hour the clouds broke, and left the face of heaven clear, blue, and promising: so off we set a little after seven. We paid, however, for the rain by having to wade for several miles through deep mud. Yesterday we had made acquaintance with hills again, and the gravel of which they were mainly composed afforded relief to our beasts of burthen. To-day the hills increased in size, and the

greater part of our march wound through a continuous succession of them. Pebbles of agate or jasper, red, yellow, brown, and grey green, of every shade, were found in the gravel exposed on their sides, and I have no doubt that the pebbles we saw both at Babylon and on all the ruins in Mesopotamia, have been brought from this range of hills, which have furnished also the agates, both transparent and opaque, that were used in their antiques, though I did not observe any of the latter in riding along.

It was a tedious work, winding through these meaningless *tuppehs;* and the ride was only lightened by one object, which I regret that time and circumstances did not permit me to examine with the attention it merits. This was the Kasr-e-Shireen, supposed to be the dwelling of the celebrated and beautiful Shireen, wife or mistress of Khosroo. This whole line of country, indeed, is rife with mementoes of this royal pair, from Ctesiphon to Hamadân. The palace in question must have exhibited an admirable example of his magnificence in these structures, although situated in a singularly forbidding country. But we must not judge Orientals by our own rules of taste. This edifice, though now recognised as the palace of Shireen, was no doubt built in great measure with a view to the tastes and pleasures of her royal lover. It was in all probability one of his hunting quarters, where he could enjoy the pleasures of the chase without being deprived of the society of his mistress. All that Oriental sovereigns regard in such residences is that sort of luxury which accords with their habits within the walls—

spacious gardens and pleasure-houses to retire to with their ladies; beyond these they care not how mean or desolate may be the prospect. Their women, their nobles, and attendants make a society and little world wherever they go; and as their chief out-of-door enjoyment is the chase, the more desert the country is around them, the better for their sport.

For all such purposes, the Kasr-e-Shireen appears to have been well enough placed; the country around abounds at this day with game. We saw large flocks of antelopes, with plenty of winged-game, both land and water-fowl. There are the remains of immense inclosures of strong stone and lime walls, which the people of the country say extend for more than three fursungs, and which may probably have contained preserves as well as extensive gardens. The fields now cultivated by the villagers, who inhabit the ruins of the present caravanserai, may, in all likelihood, have been these very gardens. Water was carried to the palace from a distance, for we saw the remains of an aqueduct, and large marble-pipes and troughs, by which it was conveyed across the hollows.

The principal remains of building are a large mass of ruinous walls and arches, called the Kasr; and another, still more in decay, at some distance, called the munzil (or residence) of Shirowiyeh, the son of Khosroo. The Kasr contains several large apartments, and some passages and ranges of vaults, which I could not examine; but the principal object is what is now called the tomb of the fair Shireen

herself, but which I take to have been a gateway and vestibule to the palace. It has four archways; three leading from without, and the fourth into the building. These archways have been handsome structures, but of the rest no judgment can be formed, because the whole having been built of the rouble-stone and large pebbles of the country, whatever of ornament there may originally have been, has fallen off with the external coating, so that only a dark and forbidding core of rude stone and lime remain. The walls and inclosures are built of the dark-grey sandstone of the hills around, which, when exposed, decays; so that, though several considerable masses remain, none are in a perfect state.

At the caravanserai, the whole inhabitants were seen basking out in the sun. I inquired of them what certain ruins on our right were, and was told they were those of the village which, about two months ago, when the news of the king's death arrived, was plundered and destroyed by the Eeliauts of the neighbourhood. The robbers even sat down around the caravanserai in which the inhabitants had taken shelter, besieging them, and plundering all pilgrims or other travellers who came to the place, ignorant of what was going on. We had ourselves just an inkling of what they were disposed to do, had circumstances permitted. On turning an angle of the road, not three miles from the caravanserai, we observed six or eight men seated on the top of a hillock, apparently watching our motions. We had along with us a man on foot, who had taken our convoy from Khanekeen to this place, and they de-

tached one of their body to question him as to who we might be. He told them a long story about my being an *Elchee* (envoy) from Baghdad to the new king, to which they replied, that it was well. But they maintained so threatening an aspect, that one of my servants foolishly enough called out in bravado, "What are you doing there? if you are for fighting, come down, and we will give you enough of it!" One of them, who was just retiring, on this looked back, and shook his stick with a flourish, saying, "Bismillah! come on then; we are as ready as you!" But I interfered to stop this folly, and making the baggage close up, pursued our way, taking the rearward myself to prevent further collision. Had we attempted to pass this road but a month before, we should have been stripped to a certainty, perhaps murdered; but since the known and acknowledged success of Mahomed Shah, and the advance of Bahram Meerza to Kermanshah, the boldness of these *reivers* has been something quelled, and they restrict themselves to smaller game, stripping only footmen or small parties, and leaving caravans alone. I own I was rendered somewhat uneasy by this specimen of the road, knowing that intelligence flies here as fast as ever fiery cross sent it in the days of Roderick Dhu; and that if harm were purposed in the line of our march, we should not escape a brush; but at the caravanserai I found a servant of Solymaun Khan Gourâns, chief of the Eeliauts in this quarter, just come from our intended stage of Pool-e-Zohâb, who assured me that there was nothing in the way to do mischief or cause

alarm. Another of that chief's servants joined the party of his own accord, and proffered himself as our guide; but he did not show himself so confident of the security of the road, for we had to pass a fort inhabited by notorious thieves of the Kelhôre tribe, and he hurried us on that we might leave it behind us before nightfall. I was glad enough when I saw the walls of the caravanserai in a valley below us, just tinted by the beams of the setting sun.

We had now entered well within the lofty ranges of Lour and Kermanshah mountains, which frowned above us in snow, and somewhat tended to shorten the period of daylight; yet we contrived to get ourselves housed in the vaults of the Khân before dark, after a march of nearly forty miles in bad stony road. It was a little singular that we here fell in with a colony of our old friends, the Mâdan Arabs. Our attention was first attracted by large herds of buffaloes grazing in some marshy ground, and soon after came upon a village or camp of their owners, housed in reed-huts, much the same as those in the Jezeerah. I learned that they had in effect come originally from thence periodically to this valley in search of pasture, but had now become stationary, and were numbered among the Eeliaut population of the country. Here we learned for the first time with something like certainty, that Bahram Meerza had actually entered Kermanshah ten days before.

February 2.—In spite of every effort to be early on foot, it was close upon seven o'clock of a most pleasant morning when we left the caravanserai,

and entered the fine though stony valley of Bee Shiwah, by a gap in the rocks, through which the water of Zohab escapes to the country below. The air was mild and genial; a thousand larks were singing over head; we had lost sight of the weary plains that had lain so long like a load upon the soul, and of the uninteresting *tuppehs* of the two preceding marches. Hills rose on every side once more, in varying shapes, and their skirts, now of a fine verdant hue, were thronged with flocks and herds and men; and here and there a little village, or a clump of tents of the Louree tribes, gave token that we had once more got into something like a peopled country. But the pleasures of our march were of no long continuance. The plain itself was stony enough, and we soon got to the foot of a pass as rough, if not as steep as most I have seen; it was, in fact, like a great torrent's bed, with this difference, that sometimes we were on a height, at others in a hollow; and even after the sharpest of the ascent was over, we continued rising and falling among most uneven ground for full three fursungs. The heights were heaps of stones, so that we had nothing but clattering and scrambling along till at the top of the pass, where we issued on a long plain, lying between two ridges of hills, and in addition to the still continuing plague of stones, found that of deep mud. At this place snow and I once more shook hands, not, as I dare say, to part again for a weary while.

The melting of this snow had so soaked the soil, that all was a complete bog, and I know not that

the horses suffered less from sinking amongst the mud mingled with stones, than from the rocky ascent itself. Although our day's march did not exceed seven fursungs, or twenty-eight miles at most, we were full ten hours about it, and the sun had almost set when we reached the caravanserai of Kerrend. This pass bears also the traces of Khosroo Purvees. At the foot there is a caravanserai built by him, now ruinous, but remarkable for being wholly covered in; a mode of building these edifices, for the most part, unusual in Persia. And about half way up, there is an arched recess called the Tâk-e-Khosroo, or Tâk-e-Gerraw, built of marble slabs of large size, and the ornaments of which, though very much defaced, are quite in the style attributed to this king. Little sculpture indeed remains; but there are some large slabs in the back of the arch which appear to have been intended to receive some design. There is also a twisted rope-like border with several fragments of cornices which look like the Roman school; but the whole is too ruinous to admit of its design being more accurately traced. What the arch may have been intended for, it is now hard to guess. Perhaps it may have recorded the date when this road was repaired or made more easy by the great Khosroo, for even yet it bears traces of former care and labour, in the removal of points of jutting rock, and the remains of bits of parapet; and doubtless that monarch and his court, from the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon and Dustagird, must have made great use of this road. Possibly it may have marked a

spot where Khosroo himself rested in his ascent, and where he desired that others should have the power of doing so at their ease. It is, at present, quite detached from any other building, an isolated piece of mason-work, but telling of power and skill beyond what is met with in these degenerate days. I should have remarked before that the whole of this pass lies through a thin oak jungle, like what we found at the Sugramah, and which sprinkled the hills on either side.

The town or large village of Kerrend, is grotesquely, rather than picturesquely placed at the mouth of a gap in the northern hills, that bound the valley; it looked neat, and its handsome caravanserai, though somewhat distant, added to the imposing effect produced by the whole. Had time permitted I should have been glad to take a sketch of the place; but the sun was setting and my fingers were like ice. It froze hard during the night, and was so cold in the morning (of the 3rd) that my servants could not be got into motion before seven. We had had some hard day's marching, which reconciled me to a short journey this day, so their indolence was of the less consequence. We only made five hours, or about twenty miles, to the caravanserai and village of Haroonabad; but the mud and stones made even this distance fatiguing, and we were more than six hours of time about it. Our way led first along the plain of Kerrend, and then across a trifling ascent into that of Haroonabad, where we put up with one of

a dozen of the villagers who pressed the use of their houses on us, in hope of the trifling reward we might probably bestow, and the gain they hoped to make by supplying us with corn and straw. There is a large caravanserai here, which, like others on the road, was built by Hadjee Hashem Khan, father of the Ameer-e-Nizam, and a man who appears to have passed his life, and spent his fortune in works of benevolence and charity; and who was rewarded lately by the loss of his eyes, which Mahomed Hoossein Meerza put out, on I know not what pretext.

We had now got rid of all that connects itself, either in appearance, or in fact, with Turk or Arab; and I was not sorry to exchange the Fez, the headkerchief, and the turban of these gentry, for the black lamb-skin caps of my old acquaintances the Persians. In dress, however, we have not quite regained our former costume. Here the national outer covering is a white felt great coat, cut like an *Oemah*, or Persian riding-coat, and good, as is said, for excluding both cold and wet. But it is too stiff, I should think, for the first purpose, as it does not lie close to the body, and the wind must consequently pass under it in all directions; besides which, they appear to make no use of the sleeves, putting the arms through the holes left under the arm-pits, and the breast, like that of all Persian dresses, is open, so that it is difficult, one would suppose, to imagine a less efficient covering than this; yet all, from the Khan to the peasant, wear

it. The peasantry also wear a cap of felt, which does duty for the kajar, black cap, and is not less efficient.

Determined to get into Kermanshah at one march from Haroonabad, we made an effort, and were on foot by six on a fine though nipping morning. The mud was frozen into hard lumps, which scarcely improved matters for the horses' feet, nor did things mend when these softened under the influence of the sun, and turned again to mud. In fact, we soon reached the snow which was melting in streams, and rendered the whole country a mass of earth in a state of solution. A more disagreeable march, as regarded what was under foot, could not well have been contrived; nor were matters improved by a fierce north wind, which blew hard in our faces, and rendered an otherwise fine day very comfortless; never were poor devils more teazed, both men and horses. Our march was good ten hours of distance, or forty miles, which we performed in eleven hours of time, arriving at the gates of Kermanshah just at five in the evening. The road lay along a succession of plains and passes. Of the first, that of Mahedusht, where there is a caravanserai, six hours from Haroonabad, was the finest and most extensive; but though lower, as I should imagine, than that of Kerrend and Haroonabad, it had far more snow than either. The latter part of our way led through a most tantalizing maze of hillocks; from the top of each, as we reached it, we expected to see the city, but were as constantly disappointed, till, at

length, turning an elbow, we found ourselves just upon it.

The situation of Kermanshah is the most picturesque, and finest, in point of effect, of any city I remember seeing in Persia. For hours before we reached it, the lofty range of Besittoon appeared, towering in great peaks and masses above the spot where we knew that it lay; and so huge do those mountains appear, that the valley below them seems to be but a strip. On approaching, as we did, from the south-west, the gardens to the south of the city are the first objects which meet the eye, and when the town itself comes into view, you see it surrounded by gardens, and orchards, and vineyards, which stretch up a little hollow behind it in a picturesque variety, that put me in mind of some spots in happy England itself. The city is built upon rising grounds which are connected with the hillocks behind, which we had crossed, and it wore a very imposing aspect in the haze of the evening, which was fast thickening around. In fact, for some hours the face of the sky had been overcast and threatened snow, so that we were right glad to get comfortably housed before it came on, in a caravanserai built, like all the others, by Hadjee Hashem Khan, and where a good fire and a few kebaubs, hastily brought from a cook's-shop in the bazaar, and a cup of green tea, made us forget everything but thanks at being secure from the storm, which soon raged without.

The morning of the 5th was ushered in by a whirlwind of snow and sleet, worthy of the night

which it succeeded. But as I earnestly hoped that the weather might clear and enable us to start on the morrow, I resolved to send without delay and offer a visit to Meerza Tuckee Ashtianee, the Vizier, or minister of Bahram Meerza, and to place myself at his service for carrying any despatches the Prince or himself might have for Tehran. An Englishman was not likely, at the present moment, to meet with any other than a kind reception, considering the prominent part which the representative of his government had just taken in placing the young king upon his throne, and especially from a brother of that king. Meerza Tukey sent instantly to express his readiness to receive me, and in a short time I waited on him. I had much to learn of what had passed since I quitted Tabreez, and many friends and acquaintances to inquire after, and if I had cause for disappointment in the conduct of some, (I am now speaking of native friends only,) it was pleasant to know that others, of whom I had entertained a good opinion, appeared to have conducted themselves just as they should have done. But how much more perfect was the satisfaction and pride with which I heard the names of my own countrymen mentioned in terms of the highest esteem and regard, and the willing acknowledgment that the rapid and decided, and better than all, the bloodless triumph of the new and legitimate monarch, was attributed wholly to the assistance of my own nation, and the prompt and efficient aid tendered to the heir in his hour of need. We had a very long conversation, with

which it would be impertinent to trouble you, and I left his Excellency to visit Solymaun Khan Gourân, an Eeliaut nobleman to whom I had letters, and with whom I meant to stay until informed that the Prince was ready to receive me.

This Solymaun Khan, chief of the Gourân tribe of Eeliauts, affords in his own person a sad example of the cruel policy of the Kajars: a policy which has rendered them so detested throughout the country that, but for our interference, Persia would at this moment have been a slaughter-house of their princes. The Khan is a brave warrior and a man of sense and judgment—two qualities which the late king, and most of his family, held to be incompatible with loyalty and their own safety. The Khan, however, was to Mahomed Hoosein Meerza, as he had been to his father, a faithful servant, and had been, as I have heard, very instrumental in promoting the success which had attended the measures of the Prince in reducing the tribes of Louristan and Shuster to obedience. But he was *too* influential among the Eeliauts; perhaps, being disgusted by certain slights on the part of the prince, he may have expressed himself as dissatisfied: how that may be I know not, but Mahomed Hoosein Meerza, by treachery, as usual, got possession of his person and put his eyes out, thus depriving himself of a noble retainer, and alienating from his own cause and fortunes the great body of the Eeliauts of Kermanshah.

The Khan retired to his tribe, awaiting his opportunity, and then repaired to Tabreez to lay his complaints and the offer of his services at the feet of

Mahomed Meerza. He had just left Suleimaniah at the time I entered it on my way to Baghdad, and got to Tabreez in time to witness the heir to the throne put himself *en route* to take possession of his rights. That heir received him with all possible distinction. I was assured that the prince, taking the blind man's hand in his, said, "Solymaun Khan, I swear to you that I shall not rest until I have placed in your hands the eyes of the man who plucked out yours." He accompanied Bahram Meerza back to Kermanshah, where he is now honoured and consulted.

I found him, poor man, his sightless eyes covered with a green silk shade, seated in a darkened room, which looked a picture of discomfort, having the windows darkened, and, instead of a cheerful fire, an article in the middle of it called a *courcy*, or stool, for keeping the company warm. This is a frame, like a low table, placed over a hole, square or round, dug in the floor, and having blankets, or a coverlid, thrown over it: a pot of fire is placed in the hole, and round it carpets and cushions, on which the inmates of the house sit, drawing the long skirts of the said blankets over their knees and thighs, and thus they remain smoking or conversing away, perhaps the whole day. The darkened state of the apartment and the wretched air of everything about it seemed in unison with the bitter feelings of its owner, whose life, by one atrocious piece of tyranny, has been rendered a blank and a burthen.

He received me with all possible courtesy, and regretted he had not had an opportunity of paying

me those attentions which he could have wished, and have better shown in his own country; but made offer of everything in his power here, guards and safe conduct to the boundaries of Kermanshah, and all I might require on the road, and, in return, requested me to make certain communications on his part when I should arrive at Tehran; this I of course promised, and soon took leave; for there was an atmosphere of gloom around the ill-fated chief which was sadly lowering to the spirits, and which no consolation in my power was in any degree likely to remove.

Far different had been the cheer in the Vizier's snug apartment. Well and warmly carpetted, a roaring fire of wood flamed in the grate, the charred cinders from which, being taken out red-hot, were thrown into a *menkal*, or chafing-dish, at the lower end near the door; curtains hung at every entrance, so that no cold air could penetrate—indeed, any that might still find its way through chinks in the large windows that lighted the apartment, was rather welcome than otherwise, for the heat was actually too great for comfort; yet both these houses, externally, were true pictures of Persian inconsistency, and ignorance of what *we* should term comfort, or even decency.

Meerza Tukey occupied the house formerly inhabited and built by his predecessor in the Vizierut, Meerza Abul Kassim, the minister of Mahomed Hoossein Meerza. The approach to it was by a narrow passage, among crumbling mud walls leading from the square before the palace. I could hardly

get to it on horseback because of the heaps of snow in the lane, and when I entered it, had to make my way amongst such a maze of walls and suites of apartments, some in ruins, some but half-finished, and through passages choked up with fallen bricks and mud, that I marvelled how any one could find his way through them twice by the same route. We went up stairs and down stairs, and across one suite and past another, and then up and down again, till at last, descending into a sort of well where sundry servants were seated round the dear pan of charcoal, inhaling its *healthy* fumes, we were ushered into an ante-chamber in good repair, and from thence into the snug *khelwut* of the great man.

The way to Solymaun Khan's house, led from the same great square, through a ruined archway, the entrance to which was so choked up with the rubbish from a bath, I believe, and with snow, that I had barely room, by stooping as low as possible, to get through, and nearly broke my back by trying to perform the same feat in the doorway which led more directly to his domicile—all outside was filth and rubbish, and all within desolation and wretchedness.

From the Khan's house I went straight to the *ark*, or palace, which was built by Mahomed Allee Meerza, the late king's eldest son, and which had at least an imposing exterior. The gate, which rises from one side of the great square, is built on a height which adds to the effect of its own altitude, and it gave entrance to an arcaded passage, from which, by several traverses, a large court was gained, in which

was the Dewan Khaneh, or hall of public audience of the prince, and subsequently of his son the late reigning prince. It seemed in good repair, and, for a Persian palace, very respectable. My way, however, led to a *khelwut*, which was approached by the usual number of passages and turns, but which saved me the repeated bows and salutes customary on public audiences. I was at once shown into the small apartment where his Royal Highness was seated in a chair to receive me. This, no doubt, was a little bit of state which the princes of Persia have of late assumed in consequence of the English having permission to sit in their presence. It became a matter of courtesy to offer them chairs, and, of course, the prince receiving them felt it not consistent with his dignity to sit *lower* than his visitors, so he perched himself in a chair also; now, whether their guests have chairs given them or not, I observe they commonly make use of one.

He received me, however, very graciously, and conversed most affably and unreservedly; he went over much of what his minister had said, and again and again expressed the obligations they all were under to the English Elchee and officers, who had, he said, offered and pressed all possible aid upon the Naib-ul-Sultanut, and forced him, even against his own opinion, to hurry on to Tehran, and take upon himself the style and title of King; from which good advice, resulted his peaceable accession—never was such a miracle! But the great drift of his wishes were to obtain some English officers, and some of the muskets which were on the way from Baghdad

to the King's army. He wanted to have a capital army himself, and to have them drilled in the English fashion. He was a great drill himself, he said; delighted in military matters, and admired the English *Nizam* beyond everything; and he begged me to try and induce the Envoy to plead with the King for the required complement of officers for him. In return, I paid him some compliments upon the good effects which the country had already experienced from his presence. That from being completely disturbed and impassable for travellers, it was now safe and free for all to pass to and fro: and I expressed my conviction, that the whole of the country under his government would soon be in the same happy condition. "Ay," replied the Prince, "I have been here only a few days. I had great difficulty in getting here at all. My artillery-horses died of fatigue, the guns got fast frozen up in the snow, and the men could scarcely extricate them; we all worked alike, and many men lost their feet and hands; but by the mercy of God, here we are, and, *Alhumdulillah*, we have done something. The country was, as you say, in a sad state; but I caught some dozens of the rogues and punished them; but how, do you think? I did not put their eyes out—that's a bad and useless plan—we have had too much of it here already; no, I did as the Russians do—put them in chains—that is a much better way. What is a man good for when he is blind? These can be made to work. So I put half-a-dozen to death, and put the rest in chains. My people were all astonished when I ordered so many irons to be made; they could

not imagine what I was going to do with them; but it was a good thought—it will frighten others. Persians must be frightened!" Thus did he rattle on at score for a considerable while, keeping my faculties on the stretch, for his Royal Highness has something of the family failing of speaking thick and fast, so that I could not always follow what he said: and at last I thought it best, though contrary to strict etiquette, to make a move to retire, upon which, he gave me my leave with great courtesy. He is one of the least well-looking of his handsome family, but bears, I believe, a fair character as a man, and a good one as a soldier.

The weather during the whole day was in the highest degree tempestuous and rough. A constant pour of rain or fall of snow, driven by a furious wind. I never saw anything look more grand and awful than the Besittoon mountains, glooming darkly as they did in the storm. Luckily for my dress-coat and cloak, the way led almost entirely through covered bazaars, so that, except where they were ruinous, we had shelter the whole way from the caravanserai to the Palace-square. These gaps, it is true, occurred frequently; nearly half of the whole way was in ruins or empty, and few places had any appearance of prosperity. How, indeed, could they? Till within these three or four months, the place has been constantly ravaged by the plague, which clung to it for three years uninterruptedly, and carried off nine-tenths of the inhabitants. The first object we observed on approaching the place, was an extent of acres, absolutely, of fresh graves — that is, all within

these two years. The next were the roofless walls of the houses whose inhabitants now tenanted these graves. The gate of the town itself was fallen in, so as scarcely to leave a passage for our horses, and we rode along almost entirely through ruins to the caravanserai, where we put up. Darkness on the first night, and storm on the succeeding day, hid the rest of the city from our view; but I fear the general aspect of Kermanshah will not bear out the pleasing impressions which, even in its winter garb, a first, but distant view gave rise to.

LETTER IX.

Discomforts of Persian Cities in Rain or Snow.—Leave Kermanshah.—Besittoon and its Antiquities.—Inconvenient Hospitality.—Lose our Road.—Snow and Ice.—Prospect of Starvation.—Averted by a strong measure.—Temple of Diana at Kengaver.—Seyedabad.—Cold Lodgings.—Uncomfortable Anticipations.—Pass of Seyedabad.—An awkward Rencounter.—Fray the second.—Seyeds and Hadjees.—Reach Hamadan.—Comfortless Caravanserai.—Parting with Servants.—Visit to the Tomb of Esther at Hamadan.

FEBRUARY 6.—The night set in dubiously after the storm of the day, and it was blast and lull till midnight, when a fall of rain set in, which threatened to put a stop to our intended movements this day; it literally roared on the roof and court of the caravanserai. Towards daylight, however, it abated, and about six, when I looked forth from my cell, it was fair, although huge ragged masses of white clouds flitting past overhead, gave no good hope of its long continuing so. Indeed, my servants appeared to have made up their minds to remaining this day, so that it was a matter of some difficulty to get them to move in earnest. Great activity was on this occasion of less consequence, as I was still forced to wait for letters promised the preceding night by

the prince and his minister, and which had not yet arrived. I must do his Royal Highness the justice to say, that his were the first that did come, and that the minister, or rather his secretary, who had neglected his master's orders, had to be called out of bed to get the others ready. They did reach us, however, and the guide sent us by Solymaun Khan Gourân, had also made his appearance, so that a little after eight we were clear of the gates of Kermanshah. Our way to them lay through a ruined bazaar and many lanes of ruinous houses, and we overlooked others in like condition beneath us. And, oh! for the misery and dirt, and discomfort of a Persian city in rain or snow; the streets knee-deep in mud, torrents pouring down from every house; heaps of snow, six to ten feet in height, over which, both horse and foot-passengers must climb at the risk of slipping down into the gulf of mud at their feet, or toppling over the wall of some dwelling, overlooked by the snowy mountain on which they tread. The sky black and louring, or pouring out its contents in addition to the other disagreeables. The bazaars half open, the owners of the shops cowering at the doors of their cells, and shivering over a pot of charcoal in their sheep-skin clothes, passengers soaked and steaming as they go along—you are literally drowned in discomforts. Then within doors, matters are little better—all is wet and cold and dirt. Those who can stay at home sit in darkness with closed windows, over a *Menkal*, or huddle in with their women round a *courcy*. In short, all comfort seems suspended, except in the

houses of the great, who can afford plenty of firewood, and have glazed windows in their *khelwuts* and principal rooms; and even in their mansions all beyond the apartments of the master himself is as bad as in other places.

It was through scenes like these that we paddled this morning. And yet, in spite of present wretchedness, I hold to my first opinion, that Kermanshah in its prosperous days must have been one of the most pleasing as well as picturesque cities in Persia. Even when we cleared the walls we were not much better off, for we got into a wide field of mud, where our horses sunk at every step over the pasterns, and sometimes over the knees. Nor did the road improve all the way to Besittoon. This lofty rock, which appears to overhang Kermanshah itself, deceives every one in regard to its distance from the city. Had I been told that the caravanserai at its foot was twelve miles from its gates, I should have disbelieved the report; yet it took us just six hours to reach it; and, as we must on an average have exceeded three miles and a quarter per hour, it must be from twenty-one to twenty-two miles of real distance.

On passing the foot of this celebrated rock I took a glance at the antiquities of Besittoon; but these have so often been described that I shall not detain you with a long account of them. They consist of three principal objects; the large artificial scarp on the face of the rock, from which some persons contend the place must have derived its name of *Be-Sittoon*—that is, "without pillars,"—next the compara-

tively small tablet, containing, I think, fourteen figures, surrounded by several other tablets, bearing a good deal of arrow-headed inscription; and, thirdly, an arch, or *Ták*, now bearing a Persian, or Arabic inscription, and surrounded by several figures, much effaced. Of these three, the two former are assuredly the most remarkable, indeed, the only ones that are so. The first is chiefly worthy of attention for the magnitude of the artist's purpose. It is a vast surface of rock supposed to have been artificially cleared, cut, and partly smoothed; and the fact of its having been done by the hand of man is not doubtful, because there are marks of the instruments, like traces by a gigantic chisel, to be seen all over the cleared surface, and because of the fragments below, which have apparently been hewn from it. Besides, there is a curious passage running along the top, eighty feet from the ground, which, beyond all question, is artificial.

That this surface was intended to bear the representation of some great national event, such as the sculptures at Shahpore and Nakshee Rustum, is most probable; but, in all likelihood, the artist or the sovereign, lived not to complete his design, for there is only one human face, and that rudely outlined, to be discovered in this whole work. Several insulated fragments that may have been intended to be formed into figures, are to be detected on certain prominences both above and below, but nothing that can lead to an idea of the artist's intentions. Beneath lie a number of large blocks of stone, partially or wholly squared, as it would seem, with the same gigantic

chisel, and scattered all the way from the base of the rock to the road. Some of the smallest of these have been used as grave-stones in the cemetery of the neighbouring village. This monument of antiquity would appear to belong to the Sassanian era.

The second; that is to say, the tablet of fourteen figures, may with fully more certainty be referred to the Persepolitan and Babylonian era: or that when the arrow-headed character was in use, whenever that may have been. This is as clear from the dress of the figures and the style of the sculpture, as from the writing itself. To what subject of history it relates, can probably be ascertained only when the arrow-headed characters are deciphered and the language they express shall be translated; and he who shall endure the labour and exert the patience requisite to copy the voluminous inscriptions which fill the tablets around these figures, will, with a view to such deciphering, undoubtedly render equal service to the world of letters and to antiquarian research.

Sir Robert Kerr Porter, in his drawing, appears to me to have rendered with great fidelity the spirit and character of this piece of sculpture, but certainly the drawing conveys to one who has not seen the original, the idea of far greater magnitude than the truth. The tablet is placed far above any point which can be reached, in an odd angle of the rock, and does not, I should think, exceed nine or ten feet in length; nor do the figures appear above two feet in height. I came to this conclusion after examining the tablet from below, with a good telescope; but its power

would not have enabled me to copy the writing with accuracy.

The third-mentioned work is undoubtedly Sassanian, and probably of the age of Khosroo, though much defaced. The barbarism of effacing the inscription of an ancient tablet to make room for a modern Arabic one, need create no surprise when we see the still more wanton defacements committed by the propagators of Islam, in all cases where they met with any work of art not Moslem.

After a rapid examination of these antiquities we proceeded about three miles further, and partly out of the direct road, to a village of Solymaun Khan Gourâns, where the guide furnished by that chief insisted on making us his master's guests. By this unwished-for exertion of hospitality, we were forced to leave a comfortable caravanserai, where the accommodations were at least ample and convenient after their fashion, in order to put a whole village in a fright and uproar, turn the Ketkodah's house upside down, and his women fairly out of it, and take up most indifferent quarters for ourselves and horses; such is generally the value of *mehmandaree* in Persia, even where best meant.

The houses of the peasants in these parts are far ruder and less snug than any I have seen in other parts of Persia. They have no fireplaces, and are generally heated by a *courcy*, or a *tendoor*, in the floor, and which serves as well to bake bread as to warm the inmates of the habitation; but as there are no chimneys, the smoke finds its way (as in some other parts of the world) through holes left in the roof and

sides for the purpose of admitting light and air. These can be but imperfectly stopped by a stone or a clod, or anything that comes to hand, and the smoke appears monstrously unwilling to trust itself to such passages, so that they answer neither purpose well—so the inhabitants have just their choice of starving of cold, or suffocation by smoke; and it is wonderful how well they endure the last alternative without the usual consequences. As for me, after for some time submitting to the effects of the acrid fumes, I found it would neither do for lungs nor eyes; so I was forced to huddle on whatever I could muster of clothes, and bear the cold rather than blindness or being stifled; and I assure you the cold was no joke this night, for scarcely had I crept into my nest, which I did sooner than usual, to escape it, than on came such a tempest of snow and wind and rain as I verily thought would have carried away the roof at least, of our lowly dwelling. My bed was well drenched by showers from the aforesaid holes, and the place was altogether so comfortless from the dust as well as the wet that drifted about in its interior, that if a light could have been kept in, I should have been tempted to get up and nestle under my cloak in some less exposed corner than where I lay; but that was impossible, and the night passed off as all nights do in a given number of hours; at six in the morning, however, the storm was as violent as ever, and for a while we had before us the pleasant prospect of another day and night in our seducing quarters. About eight o'clock, however, the clouds broke and the sun shone forth, and, though the wind

continued high, it was in our backs; and, all things considered, I resolved to take my chance of getting on were it only to Saheneh, a large village three fursungs further upon our road—so, about nine we were loaded, and off we set.

The day improved rather than otherwise, so that we resolved to continue our course four fursungs further, to Kengaver; but we had to commence the day's journey by fording up to the saddle flaps a broad and rapid stream, and the mud for most part of the way was so deep, that it was full half-past one when we entered Saheneh. The stream we crossed takes its rise in the mountains, north of the plain of Choochoolân, where our last night's lodging was situated, and, being joined by the *Gâmechoo*, or *Gaumesoo*, from Nahawund, they both unite with the Karasoo, some fursungs below Kermanshah. This river, which rises in the mountains between Kermanshah and Sennah of Ardelân, and which is crossed near the former city by a good old bridge, runs through Louristan and becomes the Karasoo, or Kerkha that flows by the ancient Susa and enters the Shât-ul-Arab below Koorna.

On our way to Saheneh we met a number of our old friends, the Mookree Koords, from Souje-Bulâgh, who, at the call of the Prince, were repairing to Kermanshah. Amongst them was mine host of the village of Beirâm, first stage from Souje-Bulâgh, who recognised me, though I did not remember him. They were to be sent, I understood, towards Shustee, on some duty connected with the pacification of the province of Kuzistân, and I own

I did not envy them their journey. They were well-fenced, it is true, in the rough hairy *Merghooz* abbas, and were no doubt accustomed to endure cold; but any military movement at such a season must be attended with great suffering.

The way to Saheneh lay through a fertile plain, or rather succession of plains, which, at this season, are notorious for the depth of the roads, and in summer for clouds of musquittoes. The village itself is a large one, surrounded with gardens, and is a regular caravan stage, so that our guide never thought we would dream of going further this day. But I had only one object, that of getting on, and that was by no means to be attained by journeys of three fursungs; so learning that the road was a plain one, and less encumbered with mud, and some of my own people professing to be perfect guides on the way, I dismissed my Gourân guide, who was to go no further, and pushed on at once for Kengaver, four fursungs further on. The road did indeed become harder, but we had not proceeded far when I observed one of my best mules to be dead lame, and, in the next place, we soon came to deep snow, which increased so much in the way as to make me rather doubtful of reaching our stage before dark. To add to our perplexity the path divided, and none of my promising guides could tell which was the one to take. Accordingly we took the wrong one, and lost nearly an hour in regaining the right track, by a perilous short cut across a valley filled with snow, and with several deep water-courses, in which my mules fairly stuck

fast. Even after we did effect our passage, the wind drifted the snow so fast, that I feared the whole caravan track would be obliterated and leave us in the lurch before dark. In short, it was my old work of the pass of Dehâ and the Khazlee-Goul, over again.

We cleared the height of the pass, however, just as the sun set, and went on in full confidence; but, as it fell dark, the ground became so spotted with black and white patches that we again lost our way while four or five miles from our munzil, and got adrift in a villanous maze of water-courses, and landed in a swamp. Had the frost been less intense, this would have fairly baffled us; but the ice was strong, as we discovered, and nothing remained but to make a bold push across a large sheet of frozen water, for it turned out that there was also a river here, with an old broken bridge, near which was a ford. For this we shaped our course, and, thank Heaven, reached the shallow water before the ice broke: had any of our beasts gone through they must have been lost. These may seem trivial evils, but they are effectual obstacles to a traveller, and no pleasant things to encounter in a cold winter's night, and in a strange country, where not one of us knew whither to go for aid, in any extremity that might occur. Once passed the ford, however, we got on bravely, and about eight o'clock our eyes were gladdened by a sight of the poplar trees of the village gardens, relieved against the clear sky; but our trials were not yet at an end. In the first place the gates were shut, and

our hallooing and shouting being, for a long time, unanswered, we had the pleasant prospect of still passing the night *sub diu;* but at length our outcries awakened one inhabitant, who had the charity to arouse the gate-keeper, and after half an hour's more delay, we were admitted. Still, however, lodgings were to be sought; and, to our discomfiture, we learned that not one of the many caravanserais had room to receive us. But here the bullying insolence of my Persian servants, though so often productive of annoyance, turned to account; for, resolving not to sleep in the open air, they ferretted out a small *hospitium,* which was full of muleteers and ass-drivers, with their beasts and goods, got hold of the owner, made him open the doors, and by fair means or foul, a soft word, and a hard blow, by lies, or by truths, Heaven knows how, they absolutely turned the whole set into the street, grumbling and mumbling, but not daring to resist with force; and in we marched, securing thus not only the lodging, but the reversion of an exceedingly respectable fire, around which the poor fellows had been sitting, and which to us, chilled as we were, was the most comfortable thing we could have stumbled upon. It was a most atrocious proceeding, but one which I could as little prevent as approve, for it took place whilst I was sitting on horseback, waiting what I innocently believed to be a negotiation with the men to pack closer, and thus make room to receive us. In fact, my fellows, suspecting certain scruples of conscience on my part, took care I should know nothing of what was

going on, till all was accomplished; and then what could I say? It was the only alternative between us and starvation, while our ejected precursors got pigged some into one place, some into another, for the night, so that all was soon right. For the assistance given to my people by the Khânchee, in this affair, I had to pay the enormous sum of four shillings sterling, but the rogue took his profit out of me in the price charged by him for corn and straw.

On awaking next morning (the 8th February) and looking out from our sleeping-place, the first object that struck my view was the remains of a Roman temple, for which this place is celebrated among European travellers, and which is supposed to have been dedicated to Diana. There were the lower frustrums of nine columns, standing on some fine solid masonry, all of marble, every slab being of noble dimensions; but the whole had been built up into the wall of an *Imaumzadeh*, and some private houses of the Goths who reside here. What a barbarism in the eyes of the antiquary! and indeed, it must be confessed, of all who pretend to any taste. I inquired whether there were any more such remains about the village; but the replies I received to this seemingly plain question, were so at variance with each other, that I could not tell what to believe. The only other ruins I observed were a few fragments of the wall, and a piece of one of the columns built into another wall, and some fine large squared stones, at some distance, resembling part of a foundation. In fact,

everything was so covered with snow and rubbish, that nothing, except the objects most exposed, could be examined to any good purpose.

We had reached the place, and got housed so late, that we were far from alert on the succeeding morning. It was eight o'clock before we got clear of the gates, and had made but little way when I was informed that the governor, Baba Khan, was coming after us to see me. This gentleman is an Affshâr of one of the highest families of that tribe, and brother to Amân-Oolla-Khan, Nassakchee Bashee, and both are on the best terms with the English in Tehran. He complained, good-naturedly, of my not having come at once and taken up my quarters with him on the preceding night, and said he should have expected me rather to remain with him some days than thus to hurry past his house without a word. To all this courtesy I replied, as in duty bound, urging my anxiety to get to Tehran, in excuse for behaving thus to one whom I felt bound to regard as a friend; but offered my services as bearer of anything he might wish to send to his brother. He told me that he was himself proceeding to the capital, and gave me several interesting particulars of what had been passing there. Such men as Baba Khan, are worth securing as friends; and the day may come when the good-will of these Affshâr lords might be valuable to those of our countrymen who may be then in the country.

We were informed at Kengaver, that for the next stage to Seyedabad, we should find neither snow nor

difficulty; and as it was but five fursungs distant, we expected an easy march. The fact was, that our horses required rest; as, whether from want of care, or being cheated in the quantity of their food by the Jeloudar—a common custom with Persian servants, or from the very wretched condition of the roads, or all these causes together, the whole cattle were falling off, and I was forced to curtail my journey, far more than my anxiety to reach the capital would have otherwise led me to do. Had roads and weather permitted, I should have made but one stage from Kengaver to Hamadan; but as we advanced, the snow became so deep, in spite of what we had been told, that to proceed beyond Seyedabad would have been madness. So having waded through a great field of mingled snow and ice, about half-past three, we came to at the house of a person at Seyedabad, who, as usual, solicited the honour of our company, that he might fleece us at his convenience; but so exorbitant was the charge he made for barley and straw, that I sent a man to Kelb Allee Khan, naib of the governor, who was absent, to represent the imposition which his townsman was attempting to practise on a stranger. But I found that this very naib had sold to our host a monopoly of the bazaar; thus not only authorising, but forcing him to squeeze to the utmost, all travellers coming that way. In effect, we found that no person in the bazaar would dare to sell us anything, and we consequently were forced to submit to the extortion of our rascally host. This, truly, is the way to encourage trade and promote general prosperity. In fact, the naib and he

were partners in the booty, and the former was so complete a brute, that it was impossible to have any communication with him; so we paid the money, and contented ourselves with assuring him of a sharp complaint against his dealings to the Khan, his master, at Tehran.

To add to our good humour, we never had more uncomfortable lodgings. The room was open to the four winds of heaven, and the fuel being wet, gave forth more smoke than heat. Dirt and vermin abounded; everything we touched was frozen, and the cold penetrated through all our coverings, so that even bed, my usual resource, was no sufficient refuge, for if I turned from one spot which had become comparatively warm, all was ice again. There was an inveterate damp in the floor that struck upwards through numud and carpet and all with a death-like cold; and I am convinced, had I not been on a journey, when nothing seems to hurt me, the effect would doubtless have been serious. Nor did the night pass without its anxieties as well as its discomforts. There is a lofty and difficult pass across a shoulder of the great Elwund mountain, in the course of our morrow's march, which at this season is very dangerous, and occasionally proves fatal to travellers. While taking my bit of dinner, information was brought, that certain muleteers, coming from Hamadan across this pass, had been caught in the *booraun*, or whirlwind of snow and drift, and had been obliged to throw down their loads on the snow; and leaving them, to run down the mountain themselves for fear of being over-

whelmed. With us the day had been comparatively calm; but no one can judge of what may be passing in those aërial regions from the state of the weather below; and it was obvious from this account of things, that difficulty at least, if not danger, was to be apprehended in the passage of the morrow. To complete my uneasiness, the night set in thick and dirty, so that we all went to sleep in a rather apprehensive mood.

Early on the morning of the 9th, on peeping from my lair, I observed the sky quite overcast, with every appearance of a fall of snow. I ordered the mules to be loaded, nevertheless; but before this was completed, the snow came down in earnest, and I was beginning to doubt what had best be done, for though the air was mild (too mild, indeed) below, there was no saying what might be going on in the Alpine regions above us, and too well did I know the freaks that are often played there when all is calm in the plains—when I learned that a chupper, or messenger, from Hamadan had actually arrived in the course of the night, and reported the pass practicable. Just as this was told me, a man of Babakhan's, who had joined us the evening before, came to tell us that several cattle and people had already started, so that the way would be clear for us, as we should have the advantage of their tracks. These muleteers being the best guides and assistants we could have, I resolved to follow them, hoping that we might be favoured with two or three hours of calm weather, which, in spite of snow, would see us over the crest of the mountain. "*Tuwukkeh-be-kho-*

dah" (trusting in God), as the Persians say, therefore, we mounted and set forth for the foot of the pass. In half an hour we reached it, and saw the mountain rising white and glistening above us, with its crest just obscured by vapour.

We all dismounted, to give our horses fair play, as the labour they must have would needs be great, even without our weight. A gleam in the south-west for a moment or two, encouraged me to hope that the bad weather was breaking; but, alas! we had not made a quarter of the ascent, when I saw with real alarm, a heavy snow-shower coming rapidly along the plain of Seyedabad, which now lay far below us. This, it was easy to see, was impelled by a smart breeze of wind, and, oh! how I watched the motion of the snow-flakes, and of the little heads of grass, and the hair of the horses' tails, to judge whether the breeze had yet reached us. Never did mariner upon a lee-shore watch the rising gale more anxiously than I now did the first blast of the coming squall; and come it did, sure enough, making the snow around us fly as thick and as fine as dust. It was just like the sand of the desert drifting before a fierce breeze. A cloud of snow-drift flew from every ridge and crest, and poured like a stream of water along the more level parts.

Happily for us, much of all that could blow had already drifted away from the windward side of the mountain, and many of the most exposed parts of its face were bare, so that though the traces of the animals that preceded us were rapidly being obliterated, we never quite lost the track. In spite of wind and

snow, and mist, before two hours more had passed we reached the top—that was one point gained; but in these *geddooks*, as such passes are called in Turkish, it is not the *weather*, but the *lee* side, that is most dangerous; for the snow blown from the high cliffs settles down in the hollows and fills them up to many yards of depth, overwhelming everything that happens to be in the way. So it proved in this case; no sooner did we leave the bare crest, than down we plunged into a snow-wreath up to the girths. The traces of our friends in front were still discernible, and they appeared to have had a desperate struggle; nor was ours a less severe one. It was a taste of Deha, and of the still more formidable Casleegeul, near Bayazeed; but at length we floundered through the worst of it, and then it was a slide and a scramble, and a roll and a tumble down a steep plain of snow, in a sort of trough made by our predecessors.

This sort of sprawling work lasted for some two hundred yards, the mules picking their way with admirable sagacity, and we bipeds leading each man his horse, which it was no easy matter to keep from floundering over him; twice had mine his hoof upon my leg, mercifully without injuring it. In truth, as the Persians say "*Khoda Ruhm-kerd ust!*" (God had mercy upon us in all ways;) for we got down the most difficult part of the descent without any more severe struggling; and, in fact, considering the place, with wonderful facility. Towards the bottom of the geddook, we found the unhappy muleteers, who had been terrified into

leaving their loads yesterday, now reloading their beasts in order to ascend: and certainly I did not envy them their job in prospect, although our own, still remaining, was no slight one; for the geddook terminated, as these passes generally do, in a ravine, at the bottom of which, at other times, goes the road, but which was now filled with snow, and we had to keep high on the bare parts of the hill, having every now and then to plunge into hollows of snow, through which the beasts struggled with infinite toil.

We were picking our way along this dubious road, as best we might, when an incident occurred which was like to have proved serious in its consequences. You will easily comprehend that in these narrow tracks made by caravans in snow, it is always disagreeable, and often dangerous to meet with another party proceeding the contrary way. Cross one another you must; jostling sends both parties into the ditch, and the party forced to give way has generally to pick some of his floundering beasts out of the deep snow, and to reload them; so that the question of who shall give way is frequently settled by blows, in which case the weaker party comes, of course, by the worst. When both leaders are reasonable old stagers, the matter is commonly arranged by a little prefatory shouting and hollowing, which leads to an understanding that one party shall draw aside, wherever the ground suits best, that is in a spot, if such be found, where the snow is shallow, and where they stand till the others pass; and when

such a spot is not to be found, it becomes difficult to manage matters quietly, however placable the dispositions on both sides.

Now it so happened that two persons, whom I afterwards understood were *Ṣultauns*, or captains of artillery at Tabreez, followed by some five or six mules and servants, met us in a place where the snow lay very deep. The leaders stood to one side to give us the road, and I was conversing with them and asking the news from Tehran, from whence they had just come, when an uproar was heard in the rear, in which the voice of one of my servants, vociferating to the rest for help, was especially audible. On looking round I saw one of my mules upset in the snow, with its load under its belly, and a sort of row and skirmishing around it. Another cry told us that the strangers had assaulted one of the *maters* (or grooms) and were beating him, and he called out lustily for assistance. I turned to the person with whom I had been conversing, and requested him to call off his people. "Oh, never mind them," said he, "it is nothing worth your attention—what is it?—it is past." But I thought otherwise, and so did the complainant whose cries continued, so I spurred as quickly as I could to the spot, and found one of my servants still struggling with one of the strangers, who, the rest declared, had struck the first blow. Three of my people had by this time come up, and the other party, now finding themselves likely to be the weaker, tried to back out of the scrape by excuses and soothing words, admitting that their com-

rade had been to blame, and entreating us to pardon him, at the same time keeping fast hold of my head mater, Jaffer, (the hero of the conflict near the Shôl caravanserai,) who, brandishing his long heavy club, had taken on himself the office of champion, and was making furiously at the culprit, who, being now thoroughly frightened, was, I believe, adding his own apologies to the rest, when the other two of my servants, making in with their sticks, put an end to all negotiation by a storm of blows. There was now a general *mêlée*. The men who had hold of Jaffer let go their grasp, in order to defend themselves, while he, thus released, fetched one downright stroke at the fellow's head, which floored him like an ox in the shambles, and down he went amongst the snow with two or three others on top of him, all struggling together. As for myself, so deep and treacherous was the snow, and so rapidly did all this pass, that I could not get up to part the combatants till after many a severe blow had been given and received, and I very nearly came in for the "redding strake," in attempting to interfere. At length, by dint of hands and lungs, I did get them asunder, quite unassisted by the two gallant captains, who maintained the same indifference as at first; and the poor wretch who had caused the uproar, rose slowly from his snowy and now "gory" bed, bleeding plentifully at the head; and I feared that Jaffer's mark was likely to be serious. It turned out, however, to be but a bloody nose after all, for the blow had alighted upon that feature, I suppose, and had, to be sure, sadly mal-

treated it. He was a portentous figure; no second-rate lad of the "fancy," just turned out of the hands of a Crib or a Belcher, could have showed a better mauled countenance.

> "The very mother that him bore,
> Would not have known her son!"

I dare say, had he come with such a face; and he appealed to me in very moving fashion, casting up the injured visage, at the same time, in proof of the ill-usage he had met with. All I could say, however, was that he had brought the infliction on himself by striking first, and offering him the very excellent advice, to be less ready in future with his weapons.

Strong symptoms of pugnacity appeared on both sides, even after the fray had been quelled, and while refitting damages, especially among my own fellows, who thought themselves the stronger; and one of the others, a *topechee*, or artilleryman, put his hand to a pistol in his waist-belt, in a threatening manner; but I quietly hinted to him that he had better let that game alone, as more than he could play at it, for I had two somewhat more efficient weapons, of the same sort, quite ready for service, on which he drew in his horns, begged my pardon, and retreated; yet I found it prudent to remain upon the ground till the two parties had quite disentangled themselves, and were out of reach of each other's hands or ears.

Scarcely had I got rid of these, and was walking on, leading my own horse and driving a loaded mule

before me, in front of all the party but one (the champion Jaffer) when, at the turning of a rock, we encountered another group, consisting of two green-turbaned gentry, Seyeds, no doubt, and Hadjees as they called themselves, with two or three other men leading their baggage mules. They contrived to pass Jaffer well enough, and one of them got clear of me without damage given or received; but the next in turn, in his zeal for his reverend master, took the halter of the mule I was driving and whisked the animal right round into the snow below the road, where it sunk at once up to its load, and replying at the same time to my remonstrances, "Never fear! never fear!" Not a little nettled, I snatched the halter out of the fellow's hand, hitting him at the same time a rap over the face with a little switch I carried. What reply he might have made to this practical rebuke I know not; for his words and actions were both cut short by the bludgeon of the ready Jaffer, which laid him sprawling before me.

This was a check so much more severe than I desired, that I turned upon the excited Jaffer; who, however, could scarcely be kept from his victim, on whom he stood glaring like a bull-dog, torn by force from the throat of his antagonist, while the unlucky wight, getting up, commenced a world of apologies, extorted by fear of a repetition of the dose, and murmured something about Hadjees and Seyeds, by way of excuse. "With the Hadjee or Seyed," replied I, "I have nothing whatever to do; let them pass on their way and I will go on mine; but what possessed you to touch another person's

mule, or turn it into the snow?"—"*Ghullut kerd ust—ghullut kerd ust,*" (he has been in fault,) said the Hadjee, now interfering in behalf of his servant; "but forgive him—he will do so no more."—"No; I dare say not, now," I replied; "may God protect you!" And so ended the second, and I, am happy to say, the last of our frays this day.

Soon afterwards, the road became wider and snow diminished; but we still had hard work in parts until clear of the valley that led from the pass. This was not until full five hours, after leaving Seyedabad, and then we had not, it was told us, made more than two fursungs, or eight miles of real distance—I think it more, however. There was snow all the way to the city, which, like Cape Flyaway, seemed to retreat as we advanced; for it was not till close upon five in the afternoon that we reached it, having started in the morning before seven; so that the distance, though only called six fursungs, must be more than seven, as during the latter part of the march we went pretty smartly. Next to the height of the pass, the last four miles were most severe; for the snow had drifted so deep as to shut up the regular road, and the path led across ditches and dykes, and overflows of water, through gardens and orchards, in so intricate a way that I was almost in despair, believing that the track we had followed was leading us past the city to some of the villages beyond.

It was no small matter of congratulation to get into the shelter of a caravanserai before dusk, and to warm our chilled frames at a fire, which was soon

procured. During the latter part of our ride, it had been piercing cold; we were wet with snow and water up to the knees; and the clouds which had congregated on the top of Elwund, sent down every now and then blasts as fierce and icy as ever came from Kâf, and threatening to terminate in something more serious still. Nor was it long ere these threats were fulfilled; for scarce had darkness closed in when with it came a snow-storm that before morning left a foot of additional depth on the ground. It continued the whole of next day, and heartily did we rejoice and thank Heaven, not only for our preservation through the dangerous pass of this day's march, but also for having emboldened us to venture; for the geddook would, after this night, have become impassable, nor could any one dare attempt it until opened by a caravan strong enough to force the pass in safety.

I look, I assure you, for your sympathy in my situation here. You know my antipathy to cold. Figure me, therefore, to yourself, seated in a cell of brickwork, burnt black with the smoke of my predecessors, and from nine to ten feet square; the side by which entrance is gained being closed by a window of wood-work which, when lowered, excludes *light* but not *wind*, leaving to the inmate the choice of sitting in cold and darkness, or in cold alone. Conceive me seated on my felt carpet, wrapped in every covering I can muster, all insufficient to serve the purpose of retaining vital heat, and submitting, as the only alternative against starvation, to sit over a pan of lighted charcoal, at the expense of a severe

headach, and, for pastime, gazing out upon a pile of snow as high as the window of my cell, a narrow passage being cut between to permit of egress and ingress. Imagine two days spent thus, eyeing the constantly falling snow during the whole of the first, and looking with longing eyes at the glimpses of sunshine that invited me out on the second, whilst the world of snow, that now lay everywhere and on everything, denied all exit. In fact, all my resting-places since leaving Baghdad, have been of the most comfortless description; and such must be the case in all winter journeys in these parts, unless a man travels with far greater means and appliances, and time at his command than I have. These, again, have their inconveniences; for they impede progress: so let those who can, during such seasons, stay at home.

On the day succeeding my arrival I had an unpleasant duty to perform. Satisfied from the appearance of my horses, and from inquiry instituted in consequence, that my jeloodar had been playing me and them false in the matter of provender, I transferred the charge of purchasing supplies for the horses to another servant, intending to see it administered to them myself. This day the jeloodar came and asked for his leave—being degraded, he said, he could no longer serve me; so I paid him his wages, treated him to a lecture and a curtailed present, and dismissed him. Yet it was not without pain: that he cheated me I was certain, and the fact once being notorious, I could not have retained him; but he was a respectful servant, and, though his

flattery was too gross to be agreeable, the appearance of good will and zeal which it produced was not without its effect. Add to this, we had been nearly seven months together in sickness and health, in danger and difficulty, in labour and toil,—and how can one part, even from an animal which has been one's companion in a long and harassing journey, without a pang?

On the afternoon of the second day, after seeing all my horses and mules newly shod, and completing all my little arrangements, from very weariness of spirit, I resolved to go forth at all events, to pass an hour away, and as, among the antiquities of Hamadan, the tomb of Mordecai and Esther is pre-eminent, I paddled through the snow to see it. Our way lay through a succession of streets, and bazaars, and caravanserais, and passages, all choked with snow, which lay piled in hillocks as high as the house-tops, from whence much of it had been thrown. Passages between these mountains and the houses, scarcely sufficient to admit two persons to cross, had, in some places, been cut; but, in others, the passengers had to scramble over them the best way they could; and all horses and mules were forced to do so, at the risk of sinking into and sticking in their substance, which many do, till help is brought and the animals are dug out. In the covered bazaars, which were dripping with wet and knee-deep in mud, each miserable devil of a shopkeeper sat crouching over his pot of charcoal; yet in spite of the weather there was a considerable number of passengers in their *poosteens*, or thick numud cloaks, moving to and fro. As to

the tomb, I only saw the outside; the snow had rendered it unapproachable, and the Jew moolah, or priest, who keeps it, was torpid with cold.

This was the case with more than him. I had a letter to Mahomed Hoossein Khan the Salâr, governor of the place, which I sent on the morning after my arrival; but not one of his people would for a long time carry it in to him. He was in *qoorooq*, as it is called—that is, in private, and denied to every one, on account of the cold—snug among his women. At last, a person who knew my servant, ventured to intrude, and returned with a complimentary message and an invitation to come whenever I liked. I replied to the messenger, that the weather was not fit for paying visits, particularly as his Highness's house was at a considerable distance, and that, therefore, I should neither put him nor myself to the annoyance of a visit.

With regard to Hamadan I can, as you may conceive, say very little. Internally, it appeared to be like all other Persian cities; perhaps, less ruinous than most. Its bazaars, though mean-looking and ill kept, seem numerous and extensive. There are a great many caravanserais, and much appearance of bustle and trade. As to externals, it is situated at the foot of the vast and noble-looking mountain Elwund—the ancient Mount Orontes, which teems with villages, and has many pleasant recesses, I dare say, in the glens and fissures which furrow its ample bosom. The city itself is surrounded by a forest of gardens, and its vineyards and

orchards extend behind it far up the skirts of the mountain. It has no wall; but since the news of the Shah's death, barricado-gates have been placed at the entrance of the principal streets, to guard against any passing or predatory attack.

LETTER X.

Leave Hamadan.—Beebeekabad.—Frozen Morass.—Wastes of Snow.—Gaugemnar.—Sore Eyes.—Courcys.—Shemereen.—Its two Chiefs.—The Secret of how to keep Warm.—Severe Mountain March, and Descent into the Plains.—Pleasant Sight of Familiar Objects, and Arrival at Assiaubeg.

On the morning of the 12th of February we left Hamadan, after a provoking detention by the usual plagues of Persian travelling—guides, servants, and caravanseraidars. As we looked back at the noble Elwund, now spotlessly white, like a huge Christmas cake, furrowed by numberless hollows, and all sugared over, I would fain have taken a sketch of its outline and of the position of the city, but the cold was too intense for holding a pencil. Let it be remembered, that on the plain we now were traversing, water often freezes into a solid mass in the month of August. What then was it likely to be on the 12th of February? Yet Hamadan boasts of as fine fruit in its season as any in Persia. The plain is very extensive, and well sprinkled with villages, many of which are surrounded with a multitude of gardens and orchards.

Our march was one of good thirty miles to Beebeekabad, having been forced by the quantity of snow to make a detour of about six miles. The

snow was deep all the way, and about two o clock the cold was heightened by a bitter north wind and keen frost, which made our arrival at our munzil, about five P.M., a matter of great satisfaction, though it was only to the customary enjoyments of cold and smoke, and vermin. Our lodging was in a stable, and I hoped that the heat of the horses would be of use to their masters in tempering the intense cold; but I cannot say it had much effect; and you may judge of the rigour of our atmosphere within doors, from the fact, that a sparrow which had found its way into the room about dusk, and which had roosted upon our baggage, was found frozen to death in the morning. Such is the climate of Hamadan in winter. May Heaven preserve me from any more such winter journeys!

Anxious to get on, we were early astir. We had an additional motive for alertness to-day; we had to cross a morass, which they told us had been the grave of thousands of mules and camels, and even of horses and men, and which at times in spring is impassable, and in winter, only safe when hard frozen over. We found that a caravan of mules and asses had started at midnight, in order to reach the place before the sun should be high enough to soften the ice which they hoped to find there, and we hurried off with the same purpose. Misguidance and ignorance of the road lost us nearly an hour on starting from the village, and I never before remember on any winter's day being so unwilling to see the face of the sun—so much did we all fear this dread morass.

There was no need, it seemed. Never was a colder night—never an intenser frost. Some horsemen whom we met, told us we might make ourselves quite easy, for the ice was as strong as a rock. During the whole morning, and more than half the day, did we proceed on foot to keep up vital heat; and so hard was the ice, and so thick the snow, that we scarcely discovered when we passed the dangerous morass, or a dull-running river, close by it. Our progress was greatly impeded by the depth of the snow, and the more so, from the track having been worn into steps of ice by the footsteps of previous caravans; and so great was the consequent delay, that although we did everything in our power to urge on our cattle, it was noon—that is, six hours from starting, when we made Zerreh, a small village, which I intended to have passed without halting at. Hearing, however, that our proposed munzil of Gaugemnar was at least as far off as the village we had left, and that, when there, we should probably be able to procure neither corn nor bread, considering also the fatigue our cattle had already undergone, and that two of my mules were lame, I judged it too great a risk to take the chance of arriving chilled and exhausted, after a march of thirteen or fourteen hours, at a place where we might find neither food nor lodging, and very reluctantly gave the order to unload and come-to for the night, in lodgings quite similar to those we have of late been used to, in the said village of Zerreh, a miserable ruined place. The price of barley and food was higher than we had yet found it—it cost

something like half-a-crown a-head to feed each of my twelve horses and mules. On inquiring into the cause of this dearth, I was informed that Kelb Allee Khan of Seyedabad, had come here with an army on his way to join the King, and plundered and utterly destroyed this and several other villages in this neighbourhood. Of a truth, I must say they appear to have picked the carcass and left but the dry bones.

I think you would laugh if you could see me now as I write this. My room is larger than usual, but that is all the worse. It has two large light-holes, which do not add to its snugness; but it boasts of a fire-place, which enables me to burn wood without being quite smoke-dried, and I have spread my carpet like a rug close to this fire-place. We are not troubled with fenders or grates. I am blowing at the embers of some vine-stalks and cowering over them—sometimes writing, and sometimes breaking off to warm my fingers. How I wish I were with you now in the snug drawing-room at M——!

February 14.—Among many a miserable night and cold lodging, I shall not forget those of the 13th of February, 1835. No appliance, either of fire or covering, could exclude the cold from my sieve-like room. It was worse almost than being in the open air, for the whole heat of the fire was carried up the chimney by drafts from all quarters, which of course took me in their passage, abstracting all the little caloric my body could generate. Had there been fifty dozen of sparrows instead of one, as last night, they would all have been frozen into a mass. I

shivered under every covering I could heap on, and though head and all were under the coverlet, my mustachios were covered with ice from the air-hole by which I breathed. When we got on foot by half-past seven,—and how the men contrived to load the beasts, Heaven knows — I had to walk as fast as possible to gather vital heat, and I never suffered so much torture from my hands. I really began to fear that one of them was gone, for a numbness began to succeed the pain. There was a heavy rime or mist arising, I believe, from the bed of some river near, that obscured the sun, and added to the intensity of the biting frost. The whole of this stage, which was only between five and six fursungs (though from winding about to avoid bad steps, it was probably a good deal more,) led through very deep snow. The hills looked like huge lumps of sugar through the fog, which sometimes thinned away a little, and added greatly to the vastness and desolation of all around. There is something unspeakably oppressive to the spirits in these long and dreary wastes of snow, which rise day after day, and march after march, in endless succession. We love not to be reminded of our own insignificance, and man never feels so helpless and so little as when his puny arm is opposed by the overwhelming might of the elements. How forlorn and wretched a thing, for instance, does a little boat appear, adrift on the vast ocean! or a solitary being wading through an endless waste of snow! But He who "giveth snow like wool and scattereth his ice like morsels—whose way is in the sea and his path is in the great

waters," heareth his creatures when they call upon him in their trouble, and preserves and brings them to their desired haven. In the mean time, however, it is right painful travelling when, to take a liberty with the words of Coleridge,

> " The sky and the snow, and the snow and the sky
> Lie like a load on the weary eye."

The snow had, in fact, laid its load upon my eyes; for, in spite of a black crape shade which I used, the glare from the white and glistening surface produced its usual effect of inflammation, an evil that was aggravated by the smoke of our munzil, and I was blind for the rest of the day and evening. Short as was the stage, our cattle had a sore time of it; and as the latter part lay among small ravines and inequalities, which were filled with drift, the toil was often doubly severe. In fact, I do not think we should have made it out had we not been preceded by a strong caravan or two, which opened the way for us: but as these caravans, consist entirely of heavy-laden mules and asses, which take short steps, and each of which treads in those of its precursor, the track becomes a succession of deep holes and heights, over which it is very painful for longer-legged animals to walk; so that we paid in one way for the assistance afforded us in another.

We passed Marach, another of the villages plundered by Kelb Allee Khan on his march, and reached Gaugemnar, which had also suffered, and which is as forbidding a looking place as I have

seen, being a square inclosure of four walls, with a tower at each corner, set down in a waste of snow, without a garden or even a tree near it, to give it the aspect of a human abode. It took us in, however, and I got a small room for my lodging, in which, instead of a fire, I resolved to try the *courcy*, as used by the natives, and had no reason to repent of the experiment. After the dense smoke, at first generated, had cleared away, and the flame had subsided, the hole in the floor was closed by a large flat stone; a frame of wood, forty inches square by eighteen high, was placed over it, and a thick quilted coverlet thrown over that. Beside this, I spread my carpets, and sat with my feet under the carpets, as warm as a pie. It communicated, besides, a genial heat to the room, which kept the air comfortable; and so long did its effects last, that, in the morning, when I was rising, the space beneath the stool was still quite warm—in fact, it acts like a stove. I little enjoyed my good lodging, however; for the pain of my eyes prevented me from doing anything but sitting with a cloth, dipped in cold water, over them; an application which greatly relieved them. To my annoyance of this night, however, were added the tidings that my two mules, which were lame, can go no further, so I am forced to leave them here with my muleteer, to follow at more leisure.

Though the morning of the 15th proved cloudy and threatening, we got on foot at seven, and marched through a succession of small ravines and hillocks, and over undulating plains to Shumereen,

called by the natives but five fursungs distant, (twenty miles,) though we consumed ten hours in going them. I believe the stage to be fully seven fursungs, and with the windings to avoid snow-wreaths, still more. The wind was in our back and the air comparatively pleasant; a great change from that of yesterday, but a change that scarcely boded us good, for we are yet among the hills, and a heavy fall of snow might effectually stop us for several days. The snow and caravan tracks delayed us much until within two fursungs of our munzil, when the former greatly diminished, and a glance down the valley cheered us, by showing that there was still less below. We had yet to cross a range of hills, however, and accordingly, from the sort of high valley in which we had been travelling, the road struck upwards and ascended among a weary tract of earthy hillocks till about five in the evening, when we came down upon the large village of Shumereen.

It was full time. The clouds, which had threatened us all day, closed in toward dusk, and after a few slight skiffs of snow, one of which we had the benefit of, began to empty their contents in a fall which lasted, without interruption, the whole night. As to lodgings, we are, comparatively speaking, not ill off, and, success to *courcys*, they are warm ones. A fire was kindled for me when I came in last night, and I am still, eighteen hours after, sitting writing with my feet under the quilt as warm as a toast. I had much pain yesterday from my eyes, but to-day, thank God, by the use of

cold water, they are so much better that I can bear to write. It is well for me that I have some occupation; for the snow continues falling with a perseverance which leaves no hope of getting away to-day, and certainly "*idlesse*" would not tend to increase the comforts of my present *séjour*.

Last night two Russians, who are domiciliated here, came to see me: they are fugitives from the army of the Caucasus, and had served for some time in the Russian battalion in Abbas Meerza's pay. They have now turned Mahomedans, taken wives, and settled here, like many of their countrymen who are scattered throughout these parts and the central districts of Persia, having taken refuge from what they consider a more oppressive service—to wit the Russian. They are, for the most, tradespeople, and are encouraged by the Persian men of rank, in whose villages they reside. One of these, who came to me, spoke a little French, and told me he was a shoemaker, and met with good encouragement from Reza Koolee Khan, Khallige, chief of this village and district. Poor creatures! sad must be their situation in their own service, when it induces them to renounce not only religion, but family, friends, and country for ever, and to seek the precarious protection of a Persian Prince or Khan. Here they appeared to be comfortable; but their colour, as well as their cast of features, plainly pointed them out as a very different race from those among whom they dwelt.

February 16.—The snow continued falling till late in the day; and even when it ceased, appear-

ances gave no good promise for the morrow. The only alleviation to the *ennui* of my confinement, was a visit from the secretary of Reza Koolee Khan, one of the lords of this district—*one*, I say, for the chieftainship is disputed by two cousins, who have their different supporters in the two courts, and who both aim at full possession of their petty sovereignty. The Meerza, a sensible man, gave me a deplorable account of the state of matters in the district, both as related to the peasantry, and the military contingent which it supplies; for, in the old king's time, it was on those central districts that his Majesty relied for one part of the *élite* of his infantry. I suspect the young Shah will have his hands full for a while, in attempting to restore matters to the condition they once were in, and in which his grandfather believed them to remain.

During the night, snow continued to fall; and even in the morning the air was heavy and thick enough to cause uneasiness; but hearing that some muleteers had taken the road, and having secured the services of an excellent guide, we got on foot about five in the morning, and commenced ascending a ravine behind the village which leads to the pass. The softness of temperature which attends a fall of snow, gave place, as we increased our altitude, to the cold produced by a keen wind, but fortunately in our backs; and, thanks to the *courcy*, we had left the village as warm as a pie. Believe me, there can be no greater mistake than to imagine that those who are about to be exposed to cold should avoid the fire previous to going out. There is no preventive

to the effects of cold so effectual as a thorough warming before exposure to it. What do the Russians and inhabitants of northern regions do in such cases? —do they keep away from the fire? By no means —covered in their warm sheep skins, they sit close to the stove, in an atmosphere at 80°; and then, when need is, out they rush into the open air, which may be at 10° or 15° below zero, with perfect impunity. The secret is simple—keep up a stock of heat —keep the blood in circulation without perspiring, and exercise will then enable you to maintain enough of animal heat to defy the blasts you may be exposed to. Children are very cruelly used in these matters. They are told not to come near the fire before going to walk, because they will be cold—and when they come in, poor little wretches, blue and pinched with the bitter north wind, and often most insufficiently clothed, they are told, "Don't come near the fire, dears; you will have your hands frost-bit—run about and warm yourselves,"—while papa and mamma and all the big ladies and gentlemen are sitting round the blazing grate, absorbing all the heat it gives forth. I remember myself, when a child, being always told: "Don't go to the fire, my dear; you will feel the cold all the more when you do go out;" and so thus were I and others kept shivering in a corner, instead of absorbing a good stock of heat to set the blood into vigorous motion before being exposed to the sedative effects of the cold. Verily, the big ladies and gentlemen, papas and mammas inclusive, have a great deal to answer for, for their inflictions in this way on the poor little folks of the family.

Scarcely had we gained the heights, when the fresh snow, driven by a violent wind that had sprung up, soon obliterated every track that had previously existed, and left us to pick our way as best we might; so we floundered along at a sad rate, and well it was for us that our guide was both a sure and an able leader. As to his powers of enduring fatigue, they appeared quite indomitable—he ran and jumped away before us, I presume, to show his vigour and keep himself warm; often plumping over head and ears in snow and drift, and thus serving as a beacon by which our loaded mules were saved many a severe struggle, and ourselves the unpleasant work of picking them out of the snow. When we had reached the top of the ascent, our way lay along an interminable narrow plain—a frequent form of ground among these mountains, and which again reminded me unpleasantly of the *Cazlee-Geul.* This was the most laborious part of our stage; for when we had passed this—which, thank God, we did, without any serious accident—the snow diminished in depth, and, after passing several small gorges and defiles in the Zeraw mountain, we found ourselves in a glen which gradually led us down to the village of Khooshkeh, at its mouth; a good twenty miles from our last night's quarters.

A great plain now lay before us; and I need scarcely tell you our delight at observing that, though all the surrounding mountains were covered with snow, the plain itself was altogether free from it, and of a most enticing brown hue. This was the plain of Zerend, a large district comprehending

a number of fine villages, and one of the central *ballooks* which furnished the late Shah's army. Our way lay across this flat, which, to our additional joy proved to be hard and gravelly, and free from the mud, which experience had told us was often left by the melted snow; and we trotted along in great comfort another twenty miles to Assiawbeg, one of a cluster of villages belonging to the *ballook*. We had now entirely changed our climate. No sooner had we cleared the gorge and got out of the immediate influence of snow, than the air became mild and genial: it breathed of spring, and I could see in many places the little crocusses and other bulbs sprouting forth and just breaking the moist earth. But scarcely less pleasant to my eyes was the sight of the great Elbruz chain of mountains—all sugar-white as they were; for they heralded my near approach to the capital, where were my friends and associates, where I should hear of home and relatives, and where, as I trusted, all my anxieties and perplexities were to cease. I recognised several familiar summits—the noble mountain of Shemeroon, and those more immediately above the Jajerood river, were pre-eminent—but the grand Demawund had veiled his face in clouds.

We found all the villages of this district nearly deserted and utterly despoiled of corn and straw, and almost all the means of sustenance for man and beast. The horses of the Royal Artillery had been quartered here; and having, like locusts, eaten the place bare, had taken flight to devour another district. I was concerned to hear that no account had

been taken of the grain and fodder thus seized for the king, and that the villagers despaired even of having it brought to their credit in the settlement of their annual taxes. It is true that I have learned to distrust, in a great measure, the complaints and *ex-parte* statements of Persian Ryots: I know that there is almost always a contest of finesse between them and their masters—on the one part to conceal, on the other to extort; but the aspect of the villages told too surely a tale that ought not to have been heard at the commencement of a new reign, and which cannot but tend to alienate the minds of men from the young sovereign. Distress, however, had not increased the honesty of the villagers of Assiaw-beg—their charges for all I had of them surpassed even the most exorbitant demands we had yet been subjected to.

LETTER XII.

Robaut-e-Kereem.—Reach Tehrân.—Successful Completion of my Journey.— Aspect of the Capital under its new Master.—Visit to the Sipurdâr and to Count Simonitch.— Members of the Russian Mission.

February 19th, Tehrân.

THANK Heaven! I can once more date from the capital, and from under the roof of countrymen and friends. Dangers and difficulties are, I trust, at an end—fatigue, and discomfort, and cold I may yet have to struggle with; but the assurance that every step made good and every day that goes by lead directly to a re-union with all that is dear and valuable to me in this world, will make these light.

The day before yesterday we crossed the plain of Zerrend, and one or two trifling ranges of mountains, a march of good thirty-eight or forty miles, to a village named Robaut-e-Kereem, about twenty-five distant from the capital. It was a fine thing to see the lofty Demawund towering over all the range before us, and growing in size and grandeur at every mile; but some feeling for our wearied cattle forced me to control my own impatience, and induced me to take a few hours' rest at this village. In fact, had our horses been fresher, it would have been easy to reach Tehran before the closing of the gates

for the night. We were early on foot, however, and at day-light next morning found ourselves only twelve miles distant from the city. All being now safe, I left the baggage to come up at leisure; and trotting on upon my favourite, the never-failing *Gougercheen*, reached the British Residency in good time for a capital breakfast, to which I was well disposed to do all manner of justice.

You can imagine with what eagerness I drank in the various information which all were ready to afford, and heard of changes, mighty changes, both in England and in Persia; and still more can you figure the avidity with which I seized on a packet of home letters and devoured their contents. . . . . It was a day of great excitement, and to me, of infinite comfort and satisfaction. My travels, painful and anxious as they had been, were now terminated. Since the time I quitted this place last year, I had ridden in all seasons and weathers, nearly four thousand miles, through provinces and countries, scarcely one of which was in a state of tranquillity, and where, hardly one night could I lay my head upon my pillow in perfect peace and security. It is gratifying, at least, to reflect that this has been effected without the loss of life or property: that of the men and animals of my party not one has been lost or destroyed, though some of the latter have been sold or left behind from accidental lameness. Nor, if you knew what has happened to others in similar circumstances, would you, perhaps, be disposed to charge me with unduly arrogating some credit for conduct and management in these mat-

ters;—for instance, I may mention a fact which came to my knowledge since, of a large caravan on the way from Kermanshah to Hamadan having been plundered and many on both sides killed, by the Eeliauts of those districts, but three days before I passed the same road. They suffered chiefly from not listening to proper advice and honest warnings; and in another quarter, that an Englishman of the name of Tod had been murdered by the Buchtiaree robbers, on his way from Ispahan to Sheerauz, whither he insisted on proceeding, contrary to all advice, and knowing the road to be beset. Assuredly, I render, as is most due, my most grateful thanks to the Almighty for the protection he has vouchsafed to me in all these wanderings; but certainly, had I been more rash than I have been, the result might have been very different. So far then, I hope I have fairly performed the duties with which I was charged; there remains to carry home in safety the fruits of my labour, and that, by the continued blessing of God, I trust to be enabled to do.

You will comprehend the desire which I felt to view the capital under its late change of masters, and to mark the traces of a revolution so bloodless and pacific—so unstained with the cruelties which have almost invariably attended the succession of a sovereign in Persia.* In fact, so unproductive of disaster or disorder had the late change been, that there was little to be seen, and that little was assuredly of a gratifying character. The bazaars, when you had gained access to them, through the

seas of mud that flooded the streets, were, perhaps, somewhat more thronged than formerly, and the crowd contained a larger sprinkling of military. The avenues to the Ark, and the space before its gate, were thronged with comers and goers, and when you entered the *maidaun*, or square before the palace, which in the late king's reign had, except upon great occasions, been generally very empty and deserted, you found it filled with bodies of troops, either exercising, or lounging about, with piled arms; somewhat dirty in their persons, indeed, but still possessing more or less of a military air; numerous groups of the attendants on Khans, officers and courtiers, too, with persons waiting to transact business at the several offices, and abundance of idlers and gazers. About the Durkhaneh, or gate of the palace itself, were clustered knots of mounted men, the jelowdars of the Khans and officers of state in attendance on the presence, and golaums and couriers on duty or waiting for orders.

On entering the palace you saw an equal augmentation of bustle and activity. In the latter days of Futeh Allee Shah, the first great court within the palace, where stands the public Hall of Audience, wore generally a deserted and almost dilapidated appearance. It was now filled with a respectable throng, and the passages on either side, leading to the more private quarters, were crowded with well-dressed people. It was only when you came to inquire for individuals, or to pass the entrance to their houses, that you became sensible of a more painful change. Many an old acquaintance was absent, and

the untrodden aspect of their deserted gateways gave a significant hint of the altered condition of their owners.

On the day after my arrival I had an opportunity of witnessing many signs of the times, in making an attempt to wait upon my old friend the Kaymookâm, now prime minister; and afterwards, in accompanying the Envoy on a visit to the Sipahdar, and to Count Simonitch, the ambassador of Russia at this court. The Kaymookâm, you are to understand, is not only prime-minister, but at present, beyond all question, the first man in Persia, not excepting his Majesty himself; for he is in the leading-strings of his Vizier, who owes his exaltation, in my opinion, rather to a fortunate combination of circumstances than to the force of his own abilities. His star has been in the ascendant—his *Taaleh*, as the Persians have it, has been great. Such a personage at such a period, may well, you will say, be difficult of approach; and the more so, as he still hugs his old besetting sin of monopolizing all business in his own person. On this occasion I found he had gone to the King, and of course was not to be seen.

From his residence, which had been that of one of the Princes of the blood, and which consists of an interminable series of courts and passages, I went to meet the Envoy at the Sipahdar's. I think I have told you formerly, that this young nobleman was esteemed as one of the most respectable at the court of the late Shah, with whom, both his father and himself were great favourites, although, assuredly, he abused the favour and trust of his master, par-

ticularly in respect to the army of which he was the commander. The pacific character of the late reign was but too favourable to such practices. The men, seldom called out, and still seldomer paid, were permitted to remain quiescent in their villages, while a small number, eked out as occasion required, by a muster of all the rogues and vagabonds of the capital, represented the large military force of the central districts; the pay of whom went to swell the money-bags of the Sipahdar. The love of accumulation, it is well known, increases by indulgence, and I have been assured that this nobleman, respectable, and comparatively liberal as he is said to be, has of late years had recourse to the most atrocious oppression to swell his store. Not only is he accused of torturing men and women to extort money, but even of extending his barbarities to widows and orphans. I hope this is exaggerated; but much, much of disgusting and horrible in this sort, is perpetrated even by those who are regarded as most respectable in Persia.

Since the late Shah's death, the Sipahdar who took the prudent part of acquiescence in the succession of Mahomed Meerza to his grandfather, and who came to do homage to the young monarch while on his march to the capital, has remained undisgraced at least, but unemployed, any further than as he is permitted to retain his government and the command, at present only nominal, of the central forces of Irâk.

We found him in the lodgings of his great friend and associate, Manoocheher Khan; and though less

crowded than formerly, his apartment was still respectably filled. The conversation, as a matter of course, turned on late events, and it was pleasant to hear the manner in which the English party and the exertions of our Envoy were mentioned; but as I do not imagine you would be much enlightened by a chapter on Persian politics, we shall, if you please, shift the scene to the quarters of Count Simonitch, the ambassador of Russia, whither we went from those of the Sipahdar.

The Russian mission, at present here, consists of an ambassador with full powers, two secretaries, and an interpreter who is also Consul, some subordinate officers, and a guard of Cossacks. The count is a native of Greece, I have been told; and so far as I have been able to see or hear, a very amiable man. He is married to a lady both beautiful and amiable, whom, however, I have not seen, as she was confined while I was at Tabreez; and, in fact, the intercourse between the missions, just then, was not frequent: but it is comfortable and pleasant for the English to have so gentlemanly and courteous a rival as the Count to deal with, under whatever circumstances may cast up; for rivals we certainly are at this court, and one can easily imagine dispositions which would render all social intercourse, in such relative situations, disagreeable and impracticable. Count Simonitch, so far as I have heard, is uniformly conciliating and accommodating in matters of business, and is assuredly a very gentlemanly and agreeable member of society.

The first secretary, Baron Bodé, is a young man

of equally pleasing manners, and a highly cultivated mind, with this special recommendation, that he speaks good English. You may imagine that I had pleasure in meeting such a person; who, though not so handsome and with less animation, put me somewhat in mind of your favourite St——y. Baron Korf, the second Secretary, or *attaché*, is also a fine young man, lately arrived; he speaks good French, sings an admirable song, and hates Persia cordially. The interpreter, Mr. Khotshkow, a Pole, is, I take it, the chief *diplomât* of the party, although he seems to play an inferior part. He also is a well-informed and intelligent man, though I would not rely on him, in all respects, so securely as on his friends. We were received by Monsieur Le Comte with all possible kindness; and after a conversation, which turned principally on the present condition of the country and government, and in which the sentiments of both envoys were of one accord, we returned home.

LETTER XIII.

Some Particulars relative to the late Shah's Death, and the Accession of the young Monarch, Mahomed Shah.—The late King's Journey to Ispahan.—Motives of that Journey.—Its Progress.—His Death.—The Firmaun Firmaee assumes the Ensigns of Royalty.—News of the Shah's Death reach Tabreez.—Extreme Difficulty found by the British Envoy there to rouse the Prince and Kaymookâm to action.—Great Exertions of the Envoy and British Officers.—Extraordinary Conduct of the Persian Authorities.—The Army marches, the Advance under Sir H. B. Lindsay.—An Army despatched by the Zil-e-Sultaun to oppose the Prince's Progress.—Disbands and joins the Prince's Force.—His Royal Highness arrives at Tehrân—is crowned King there.—After great delay a Force despatched to subdue the South of Persia.—King's Subjection to the Authority of his Minister.

ALTHOUGH I have spared you, in general, the "parish business" part of Persian politics, as neither being likely to amuse you, nor always of a description to be told, I think you must certainly feel an interest in the revolution which has taken place in the country through which you have accompanied me, and be desirous to learn some of the particulars connected with it. This information there can be no cause for withholding, and the best form I can afford it in is, I think, by giving you the substance of a journal kept by a native, who accompanied his Majesty to Ispahan, and was there at the time

of his death, and of another by an officer of the mission on the spot, which he has kindly permitted me to make use of for this purpose.

When Mahomed Meerza (now Shah) returned from Khorasan, in June last, after a short stay in the capital at the court of his grandfather, he left it for his government of Azerbijân, and was accompanied by the British Mission to Tabreez. It formerly was customary for his Majesty to leave his capital in the hot months of summer; and, surrounded by his army, to encamp on the high and extensive plains of Sutanieh, until the return of cold weather; on these occasions, I believe, the English Envoy generally accompanied his Majesty; but of late years, during the summer months, it has been more usual for the Mission to reside at Tabreez, where the Prince Royal held his court.

You have seen, by my former letters, that his Majesty has, for some time past, been in very indifferent health, which, with his advanced age, led to the fear that his demise could not be distant; nevertheless he resolved upon taking a journey into Fars, and summoned his troops to be ready for the purpose of accompanying him. My native authority, who, occupying a post equivalent to that of under secretary of state for foreign affairs, must have been well-informed, gives the following considerations, as the chief motives for his Majesty's journey :—

First, The disturbed state of the country, in consequence of the frequent reports of his Majesty's ill health, and even death, which would, of course,

be disproved by the successful performance of such a journey.

Secondly, The increased audacity of the Buchtiaree mountaineers, who were constantly robbing and plundering caravans and travellers, and who had even dared to seize on a convoy of the royal treasure on its way to Tehrân from Ispahan, between Moorchacoord and Soo.

Thirdly (and above all), The insubordinate and contumacious conduct of the princes and governors of distant provinces and districts, who, daily expecting the tidings of the King's death, withheld all tribute and revenue. From Fars alone near 600,000 tomauns (more than 300,000*l.* sterling) were due, and the total failure of every effort to compel a settlement, convinced the Shah that force alone would bring the Prince to reason, and this he resolved to make use of.

Accordingly, in the month of September last (1834), orders were issued to prepare the royal camp, and the king moved out to the Nigaristan to complete his preparations, while at the same time he sent messengers to the Firmaun Firmaee, either to advance to meet the Shah at Ispahan with the full sum due, or prepare for that monarch's appearance in Sheerauz with an army to demand it.

A force of thirty thousand horse and foot were accordingly collected, and Allee Nukee Meerza, Imaun Verdee Meerza, Abdoolla, Mahomed, Reza, Suleimaun, Kai-Kobad, Keyomurz, and Saheb Keran Meerzas, were appointed to attend the royal person. Two ladies of the harem, the mother of

Fath-oolah Meerza, and the Zea-ool-Sultanet, with suitable retinues, were also directed to be in attendance. The Taje-u-dowlut (long the reigning favourite) was already at Ispahan. The remainder of the princes, with the royal Harem, under the superintendence of Khosroo Khan, remained in Tehrân, where two thousand *serbauz*, four guns, and a large body of *zumboorukchees*, *yessawuls*, and *toffunchees* were left to protect the city.

On the 14th, Jumâd-ul-Awul, the royal camp, made its first march. The King's Nazir (steward), Ibrahim Khan, not having come up with the royal kitchen, his Majesty was forced to become the guest of Isfundiar Khan and the Moatimud one day, and of the Mazunderan chiefs, another : on the third, the Nazir came up, and was delivered over to the *Meer-e-ghuzub* (head executioner) to receive five hundred strokes of the bastinado, after which he was conducted to Koom, riding naked upon a camel.

At Koom, his majesty halted two days, and visited the tomb which he had ordered to be prepared, and was so soon to fill. Finding it still unfinished, as if anticipating the early period at which it would be required, he ordered it to be forthwith completed.

At Shurâb (a stage further on), the disgraced Nazir was received into favour again, and presented with a dress of honour. Ibrahim Khan is brother of the Ameen-u-dowlut (the King's prime minister) !

So delighted was the Shah with the Bagh-e-Feen at Cashân, containing a palace of the Suffavian monarchs, that he halted there eight days, during which

time the whole royal household were entertained at the expense of the Sipahdar, in whose government Cashân is situated. At Cashân he feasted the mendicants and bestowed a piastre on each.

Chuppers from the Firmaun Firmaee, with presents, arrived at Cashân, bringing also excuses for the non-payment of their contingent of revenue, in consequence of alleged insurrections. But the King was not to be deceived, and dismissed the messengers with a reply, that the Firmaun Firmaee might please himself in regard to his future movements, as the Shah was now resolved to visit Sheerauz in person. During all this time the King appeared in excellent health, and constantly amused himself with practising at a mark and witnessing exhibitions of wrestling.

On the 27th the camp moved again, and on the 3rd of next month entered Ispahan, near to which he was met by the whole mass of the population; and he took up his quarters in the gardens of Saadutabad (one of Shah Abbas's palaces) which the Seif-u-dowlut had prepared. *Pa-undazes** and presents in plenty were awaiting his Majesty; and, in return, the nobles, Moollahs, and Seyeds of the city, were presented dresses of honour, and received many testimonies of the royal favour.

The Shah continued in excellent health and spirits, holding a public *Salaam* twice a day, and in the evening generally riding out to take the air. One day

* These are the spreading of rich cloths, shawls, or brocades, on the ground for the King to walk upon when he alights from his horse to enter a palace or house.

he entered the city in state, and paid visits of ceremony to the *Oolemâh* and *Mooshteheds* of the place. Six days after the Shah's arrival, the Firmaun Firmaee arrived from Fars; but having deceived the Shah by a promise of the whole arrears being on the way, while only thirteen thousand tomauns actually arrived, the favour with which he had at first been received was changed to high displeasure. His Majesty dissembled, however, until he had received the thirteen thousand tomauns; but that being safe, he abused the Prince, and threatened him, and finally appointed commissioners to take decisive steps for collecting all the arrears, ordering the Prince, meanwhile, to be confined till they should be realized.

These commissioners were Meerza Abul Hussein Khan and the Sipahdar. Mahomed Tuckey Meerza made much intercession for his royal highness with the King, but in vain, and at length Ameen-u-dowlut was ordered to proceed to Fars with ten thousand horse and foot, and four guns, for the purpose of settling the country, and levying contributions from all districts withholding their assessments, and forcing the Firmaun Firmaee to come to an equitable adjustment of the claims against him. A war of extermination was to be waged against all recusants — the country was to be ravaged by fire and sword — the crops destroyed — the villages burned and the cattle plundered; and after *kella-minârs* (pillars, or towers of skulls,) being made of the skulls of the inhabitants wherever plunder had taken place, the survivors, both Eeliauts and cultivators, were to be

borne off captives to Tehrân. The Shah having decided on these measures for coercing a settlement, became indifferent to the movements of the Firmaun Firmaee, who set out for the south.

On the 14th of the month, the Shah, at the Salaam (public audience), after destributing several kheluts of honour, addressed the assembled princes and nobles in these words: "Whoever among you have been by me entrusted with the administration of provinces or districts, towns, or even villages, dismiss from your minds the crude idea that I am old and unable to exert myself for the purpose of realizing the revenue, for the collection of which I have placed you in your respective commands — you shall find that I have vigour enough to enforce payment from every one of you, even to the uttermost farthing, and whoever presumes to withhold from me my dues, on his head be the consequence!" — Soon, indeed, was the vanity of these words to be demonstrated.

The arrangement of full powers or instructions for the guidance of the Ameen-u-dowlut, and preparations for his expedition into Fars, occupied the Shah for a few days, during which he held a Salaam as usual, twice a day, and appeared in his usual health, even amusing himself with riding and shooting at a mark; but on the 17th, in consequence, as was supposed, of eating some indigestible food (*zerneck*), he suffered an attack of fever, but so slight as to occasion little apprehension. On the 18th, however, the indisposition increased, and the physicians pronounced that an affection of the

lungs had also taken place; yet on this day his majesty held his court, as usual, and gave the Ameen-u-dowlut his audience of leave.

On the 19th, the Shah, for the first time, did not appear at the Salaam; and during the whole of the day his illness visibly increased. Still, however, he continued to transact business, calling the royal eunuchs on several occasions, and sending them with messages to the different officers of government. When the hour of evening prayer arrived, he tried to raise himself up, and join his hands in the attitude of devotion; but the effort was too much—his hands dropped powerless by his side, and he was scarcely able to call out to the Taje-u-dowlut (his favourite wife), the only individual in the apartment: "Place my feet towards the Zibleh!" As her highness ran to his assistance he again called out: "Alas! I am gone!" and expired without a groan, a struggle, or even a sigh. Thus, half an hour before sunset, on the 19th day of *Jamâd-ul-Sânee*, A. H. 1250 (23rd October, 1834), died Futeh Allee Shah, king of Persia, in the eightieth lunar year of his age, and fortieth of his reign.

So far my native friend's MS. It was continued for some time longer, and gave an interesting account of the confusion and troubles which immediately succeeded the King's death; but, unfortunately, I could obtain no more of it before quitting Persia. The Firmaun Firmaee, immediately on hearing of the event, returned to Ispahan, and taking possession of the crown jewels, assumed the style of King, and was, I believe, crowned by the Ameen-u-

dowlut, aided and abetted by Hadjee Seyed Mahomed Baukher, the Sheikh-ul-Islam of Ispahan.

In the mean time the English Envoy, aware how soon the hour might come when the young heir-apparent would be called on to assert his rights to a vacant throne, lost no opportunity of representing to the Kaymookâm the importance of preparing for action, and particularly of putting the arsenal into a proper state. Yet notwithstanding all advice, and the obvious and imperative necessity of such measures, nothing would the minister do; and the Envoy at length, as the only means of preventing the consequences he dreaded, actually made advances from his private resources, to set the workmen in the arsenal a-going. It was solely by these means, and by the activity of Sir Henry Bethune Lindsay, and the superintendant of the Ordnance, Mr. Nesbitt, that some progress was made in preparing various sorts of stores and ammunition.

It was on the 7th of November, after various flying reports had for some time prevailed, that the Envôy received official information from the Kaymookâm, of the Shah's decease at Ispahan; but the knowledge of that event did not appear to awaken any energy in either monarch or minister; and, as the author of the Journal from whom I quote observes, now was the conduct of the Kaymookâm and that of the British Envoy placed in striking contrast to each other. Had the latter not taken the active part he did, not a thousand musket cartridges would have been ready at this crisis. Again did he represent in the most forcible language the

necessity for paying up the troops, and giving money for the carriage of stores, &c.; but even still, the minister would do nothing. "We have not horses to drag the guns," said the Kaymookâm to the Envoy, at one of these conversations; "and I have not the means of procuring them." "I will give all my horses," said the Envoy, "and every one of the mission—every Englishman will do the same." "Allah-il-Allah!" ejaculated the minister; "but what will you do then?—you must go with us—you must not stay behind." "No, we will accompany you on foot," was the Envoy's reply; which produced one of his Excellency's keenest stares, and many "Barikillahs," but little other effect.

Perceiving that no assistance was to be expected from the Kaymookâm, Sir John took his own part at once. He gave more money for the arsenal, and went there frequently—often three and four times a day, to hasten the preparations. To each artilleryman and foot-soldier he presented from two to three tomauns, and thus not only soothed the troops, who, many of them, were more than half mutinous for want of pay, food, and clothing, being three years in arrears; but by such means, and fair words, got them to consent to march. His exertions, and those of Sir H. Bethune, were really great and unremitting; and it was wonderful how much was done in so short a time, and with means so limited.

On the 10th November, Sir H. B. Lindsay left Tabreez for Meeana, where the troops were to concentrate. Fourteen or fifteen guns and one infantry corps, intended to form the advance of the young

Shah's army, had previously left Tabreez. Yet, though the Envoy had pressed the necessity of the troops under Colonel Passmore being ordered in immediately from Khoee, they did not arrive until the 15th.

The Persian authorities, after giving two tomauns a-piece to some Serbanz, declared they had *no money*. This treatment was not calculated to satisfy any of the men; and had the Envoy not taken the lead now also, in offering money for the emergency, the troops would certainly not have moved from Tabreez. The Envoy and officers of the mission and detachment went to the Maidaun, and with their own hands paid the men their wages, and spoke to and reasoned with them with so much effect, as to decide numbers of them to follow Sir Henry and the fortunes of their Prince. The fourteen guns which accompanied the force, and which formed a most influential part of the expedition, were equipped entirely by the exertions of the Envoy, Sir H. Bethune, Mr. Nesbitt, and the officers of the detachment. In fact, his labour and anxiety continued incessant and unceasing; for not only could he obtain no assistance whatever from the government authorities, but the merchants demurred at giving money for bills on India, so that after much negotiation he was forced to give bills on Constantinople.

On the 16th November, his Majesty, the Kaymookâm, and all the court, left Tabreez without any intimation to the Envoy of their intentions—without paying or attempting to satisfy the troops, or making any arrangement for the despatch of either

men or stores; leaving Sir John not only to find money for these exigencies, but to arrange all the details himself, without a single native authority in the town to refer to, or in the Ark, to render assistance. Probably, such conduct under similar circumstances, and on such an occasion, is without a parallel; and if left to itself, must have inevitably produced failure and disgrace; but the Envoy of England did his duty by standing up for the interests of the Shah, and the credit of his own country, when deserted by both Shah and ministers—and he succeeded.

At this time the Russians offered troops to put the Shah upon the throne, without expense or trouble, but refused every other species of assistance, and even encouraged the men of the Russian battalion in the Persian service to desert (a captain and ten men in one morning took the protection of the Russian Envoy, and were immediately sent across the Arras); so that everything, in effect, fell upon the Envoy of Great Britain.

After the King's departure, the Kaymookâm returned to the vicinity of the city; but hid himself in gardens, changing his place of concealment every day, so that the Envoy could never effect a meeting with him. Still, however, under the superintendance of the latter, the work at the Arsenal went vigorously on.

On the 24th, Colonel Pasmore marched to join the rendezvous of the troops at Meeana; all the regiments having gone on, except the Russian battalion, which also march this day. The force gone,

amounts in all to between four and five thousand serbauz, and twenty-four guns, &c. The advance, under Sir H. B. Lindsay, has proceeded to cross the Kafflankoh, and will take up a position at Zenjân.

Nov. 26.—This day the Envoy, after seeing everything ready, and all the soldiers *en route*, left Tabreez to join the Shah, who is to wait at Meeana for the British and Russian missions, which will accompany him in his expedition.

Nov. 30.—Having this day crossed the Kafflankoh we joined the Shah's camp at Ak-hend. He had only four hundred infantry and two swivel-guns with him, the main army having gone the low road by Sirchum. Sir H. B. Lindsay is at Zenjân. We know that the Zil-e-Sultaun, who has proclaimed himself Shah, has sent a force from Tehrân, under Imaum Verdee Meerza, to oppose the advance of the Shah.

This day, Allee Nuckee Meerza, who left Tehrân as an adherent of the Zil-e-Sultaun, and for the purpose of seizing the district of Khumsa, seeing the strength of the King and the *Elchees* (Envoys) with him, came in and submitted to his Majesty. He was kindly received. This was the first decided instance of defection from the Zil. Next day another son of the late Shah, Abdoolla Meerza, who had tried to seize Zenjân, came in and tendered his submission.

After this, chiefs, and tribes, and princes, came in numbers. As Sir Henry's outposts, on his approach towards Casveen, were observed by those of Imaum Verdee Meerza, who was advancing

with the Zil's army, the latter fell back; and then came in the Khans, to whom the Envoy had written, Imaum Oolla Khan, the commander of Imaum Verdee Meerza's force, and Solymaun Khan, Affshars, among the first; then the brave, wine-bibbing Hassan Allee Khan Kajar. Next came Zohrab Khan, with little Sahebkerân Meerza and the artillery, and then Imaum Verdee Meerza himself, being left without an army, came into the Envoys and surrendered to his nephew's mercy. In short, from Zenjân to Tehrân, the whole march resembled a triumph rather than the advance of a hostile army. All the districts sent in contingents of horse, and all the chiefs came with their retinues to profess allegiance; Imaum Verdee Meerza, presuming on the Shah's clemency, made the strange request that the advance of Sir Henry might be stopped; on the same night the small remainder of his force dispersed, or came over to Sir Henry's camp.

On the 18th of January, while encamped at Shaeen tuppeh, the last shadow of resistance was dissipated by the tidings that the Zil-e-Sultaun had been seized and imprisoned by Mahomed Baukher Khan (brother of the Ausef-u-dowlut), and that the capital was held by that chief for the Shah.

On the 21st, the Shah, attended by the Envoys, reached Tehrân; but took up his residence in the Nigahrestan palace without the walls, while the city and palace were occupied by troops under Sir Henry B. Lindsay. It was then found that all the jewels, and most part of the treasure, were safe.

The King sat, this day, on the small jewelled throne in the presence of all the people and both missions.

No *lucky hour* for his Majesty's entry into the city being found by the astrologers until the 2nd of January, 1835, he remained till then in the Nigahristan, and, on that day, at six o'clock A.M. he made his entry.

On the 31st of the same month, being the Eede or feast after Ramazan, and the hour being propitious for the coronation of the Shah, that ceremony was performed. The Zil-e-Sultaun himself, having enacted the part of King for thirty-five days, now assisted at the coronation of his nephew.

The importance of securing the city of Ispahan for the Shah, without delay, was constantly pressed upon the Kaymookâm, as well as on his Majesty; yet, notwithstanding the representations of the Envoy and the exertions of Sir H. B. Lindsay, who was now deservedly in high favour, such was the dilatoriness of the authorities, and their extraordinary reluctance to part with money, or to attempt to soothe the soldiery into good-humour, even by partial payments, that it was not till the 3rd of February that Sir Henry was enabled to depart with the force destined to subdue and secure the south. This force consisted of three battalions of serbauz—say two thousand five hundred to three thousand regular infantry—and sixteen guns, and a small number of horse; but there are more men said to be at Kashan. A fortnight afterwards the Moatimud-u-dowlut (Manoocheher Khan) set out with reinforcements to assist Lindsay, and take

charge of Ispahan and the districts to be subdued in the south. It is *said* he will have eight thousand men in all.

Such were the principal events which had taken place at the time I reached Tehrân. The English, as well might be the case, were in high favour; at least nothing could be more courteous in all externals than both King and minister. But it soon appeared how little the former had to say, either publicly or privately, in matters of state or of his own affairs. The power which the minister had monopolized, at the time when I saw the Prince and his Excellency in Khorasan, and afterwards in Tabreez, was increased to so exclusive and enormous an extent that his Majesty, it was averred, dared scarcely give a command to his body-servants, without the consent of his minister. Of this many ludicrous instances were told. I have been assured that, during the period of anxiety after the King's death was known, he had scarcely a Peishkhidmut left with him, and could hardly get a horse made ready to ride on. In fact, he was, people averred, little better than a prisoner in the hands of the Kaymookâm, who, when he was about to quit the city for Oujân, sent him his horses and grooms, with orders to mount and follow within the hour. They say that so severely did he feel this his condition, that he actually wrote to the Ameer-Nizâm, begging him, for God's sake, to send him a few troops if only to take care of him. But let the Kaymookâm beware; the Shah, from indolence of disposition, may endure such domination for a while, for the

sake of the ease it gives him. But he has a fierce and violent. temper, which may be some day roused against his arrogant master, and sweep him away as a leaf is borne off by the torrent; for the Kaymookâm has few friends and many enemies, who, at the first word, would be the ready ministers of vengeance.

LETTER XIV.

The Hakeem Bashee.—Visit to the Minister.—Meerza Allee.—The Kaymookâm.—A promising Conference abruptly broken up.—Another Interview.—A tough and wily Argumentator.—Dietetics.—A strange Meal—and an unsatisfactory Interview.—Audience of his Majesty.—Last Visit to the Kaymookâm.—Singular Place of Reception.—A strong Dose of Truth.—News from Home.—Speculations.—Hadjee Aga.—A Persian Breakfast.—A Russian Breakfast.—Ispahan taken by Sir H. B. Lindsay, and the Firmaun Firmaee's Army defeated near Muxood Beggee.—Continued Perversity of the Kaymookâm—his Character.—England's Responsibility to Persia.—The Shah and the Bone-setters.—News from Khorasan.

February 22, Tehrân.

I WENT this morning to call on Meerza Baba, his Majesty's chief physician, a person in whose acquaintance and conversation I take great pleasure. To the liberal feelings which he imbibed in England, where he received his medical education, and which good seed fell in good soil, he joins a sincere desire for the amelioration and prosperity of his country, which renders him a most valuable counsellor in all affairs that regard the joint interests of England and Persia. I had been particularly desirous to see this gentleman previous to my promised interview with the minister, as there were several points regarding which it was desirable to be informed

before conversing at all with that functionary. After breakfasting, therefore, with the Hakeem Bashee (chief physician), I accompanied him to the house of the minister, who was still in the *underoon,* that is, in private, keeping out of the way of the crowd, who anxiously awaited his appearance to transact business.

Until his Excellency should emerge from his harem, we both went into the apartments of his son, Meerza Allee, where we sat to await that event. Meerza Allee was a lad of about fifteen or sixteen, sharp, and quick-witted, but a perfectly spoiled child, as saucy and insolent as the rankest hoyden coquette. Unlike most Persian youths, who, from their infancy, are taught to pay the greatest attention to matters of etiquette, and to demean themselves respectfully to all, especially to those of an age much beyond their own, this young man lolled and rolled about in his seat, taking not the smallest notice of his visiters, except to ask the Meerza some questions about his own health, (for he had been sick,) in loud, familiar, and even rude tones of voice.

During the time we remained there, several persons entered the room, who had enjoyed high rank and consideration in the late reign; and one among the rest a Kajar Khan of one of the first families, nearly related to the late Shah himself; yet the rude boy scarcely noticed the entrance of any of them, hardly uttered the commonest compliments usual at such times, but took to rocking about in his seat again, reading in a loud tone a paper

handed to him by a servant, whom he occasionally interrogated, with a laugh or a joke at its contents. So utterly at variance with all rules of good breeding was his conduct, that the Meerza, who had already been regretting some of the unlucky failings in the minister and his family, which had made him many enemies, turned to me, and observed in English, shaking his head. "This will never do! This boy will ruin all—he will disgust every one!" It was a great relief when a servant came and announced that his Excellency was ready to receive me.

I found the minister in a very small and dark apartment, warmed by a blazing fire, and apparently just awakened from sleep, for he was sitting under a wrapping cloak of fur, his immense circumference unshackled by shawl or girdle. In his hand he held, as usual, a world of notes, while many more, read and to be read, lay on the ground, and swelled out the cincture of a secretary who stood before him. Two other attendants stood at the door, and near it sat a man whose stained garments declared him to be a *chupper* or courier, just arrived from service. We had been admitted into this *khelwut* (private cabinet) through a narrow passage, guarded by furoshes and eunuchs, orders had been given to admit no one, and thus there was reasonable hope of a quiet and uninterrupted audience.

The minister, always courteous, received me with cordiality, even making the motion to rise from his seat as I entered, which was more than his saucy son did; and having sat down near him I waited

for him to open the conversation. But the *chupper* was first to be disposed of: he proved to be from Khorasan; and then the multitude of notes, many of which were from the late King's ladies, and all of which, I must say, duly received replies; the Kaymookâm is, at least, thus far a gallant man. All this occupied, at least, three quarters of an hour, after which the good man shook himself free, as it were, of what remained, dismissed every person but one secretary, and then turning to me began to question me respecting my journey, and desired to know what I had observed in the course of it.

According to his Excellency's request I had communicated to him in writing, from time to time, such facts as I had observed and thought could be useful for him to know, or what seemed likely to tend to the amelioration of the country; these letters he acknowledged with thanks, and I was preparing to follow up these details in a manner that might impress them properly, when in came a eunuch, in haste, to say that two of the late King's sons, Imaum Verdee Meerza, and Allee Nuckee Meerza, were on their way to see him, and would take no denial. In fact, scarcely had the eunuch well delivered his message, and the Kaymookâm vented an expression of vexation, when the two Princes, just named, entered the *khelwut*.

Up jumped the minister, fat as he was, and up rose I—for it was clear that *our* confab. was at an end for that time. His Excellency muttering a few apologetic phrases, ran out to put on his shawl girdle; for it is highly indecorous to appear before a superior

here with the loins ungirt — and I, after staring and being stared at for a minute or two, and seeing no refuge but in retreat, quitted the room, and found the minister in a great bustle in the passage, fumbling with his shawl: I just seized the opportunity to throw in one word on a subject which I had much at heart — his Excellency replied with another ejaculation of regret — and so I left the house.

February 23.—This day I accompanied the Envoy and Dr. Reach to visit the minister, and listen to a discussion connected with a matter of considerable moment to both countries; and thus I had an opportunity of seeing this singular man in another point of view. When we arrived, which was about eleven o'clock, A.M. we found that his Excellency had been scarcely an hour arrived from a tough interview with the Ausef-u-dowlut — no friend of his — and was fast asleep. He had been roused, however, and, in the mean time, we were shown into the same *snuggery* where I been on the previous day, from which, just as we entered, we saw a female escaping, and a bed, loosely folded up, lying in the corner.

The subject to be discussed was not by any means agreeable to him, and it was amusing to observe how, for the first half hour, he eluded all questions put, or shrouded himself in affected drowsiness. As the argument pressed on him, however, he warmed up to the battle — opened his eyes, and stood the charge that was made upon him, and charged again, like a lion roused from his lair. Neither the subject of discourse nor the arguments on either side were

such as I can relate, or, indeed, of a nature to interest you; but I must say that I was greatly and unfavourably impressed with those used by his Excellency. They were puerile, narrow-minded, and weak; and, assuredly, tended to give me no high opinion either of his good sense or his honesty.

During all this hot engagement between the principals, there was kept up a constant running-fire of notes and messages, which proved a most provoking interruption of the business in hand; yet it was not unamusing to observe how his Excellency took advantage of every turn and winding of the conversation, and of every pause occasioned by these interruptions, to fly from the subject under discussion; till at length, after a *sederunt* of more than two hours, finding himself, probably, inconveniently pressed, he threw himself back as if exhausted, and, calling to an attendant, desired to know "whether they had a design upon his life?—whether they meant to give him any breakfast?" The man looked blank, and muttered: "*Be-chushum!*"—"Upon my eyes be it!"—but remained still as a post—waiting orders, no doubt. The Kaymookâm also appeared to think there were other orders to be taken besides his, for it seems he was under medical regimen—so, turning to Dr. Reach, who was sitting close but nearly opposite to him, he said: "and what am I to eat, Hakim Saheb?—Shall I eat water-melons?—have I permission?"—"If you ask me, Kaymookâm," said the Doctor, "I tell you plainly I'll not let you touch the least bit of one."—"No?—by your head? Nor grape-juice either, I suppose? Nor

sweet limes?"—"Certainly not, Kaymookâm."—"Nor mâs (sour milk)?—nor buttermilk?"—"All these things are equally bad for you, Kaymookâm, and you know that yourself—why do you ask me?"—"Wullah?" (is it so?) grumbled the minister, with a half laughing, half peevish expression. "Ah, Kaymookâm! you will gain nothing by going that way to work with the Doctor," said I; "he has an ugly fashion of telling the truth, and nothing but the truth; he fears no human being."—"Why should I fear?" said the Doctor; "I say nothing I should be ashamed of, and what, then, have I to fear?"—"What? you fear none then?"—"No, Kaymookâm, I neither fear you, nor your King, nor my own King: I have just one way of speaking and of acting—and otherwise I can neither do nor say, come what will."—"Ay," observed I, there is but one whom the Doctor fears."—"And who may that be?"—"*God*," said I; "he *fears* to offend HIM who made Kings and ministers, and all men, by saying one word the reverse of truth."—"*Barikillah!*" said the minister, after looking at us for a moment or two, and wincing a little, as I thought and wished, under the pointed expression of the words which had not been said without a reference to the foregoing argument—"*Barikillah!*"—if I had a country surrounded by the sea, and an army of some hundreds of thousands of men, and powerful fleets, and plenty of money, so that I could give an answer to (meaning set at defiance) any that should offend me, I should fear no one either; but —"—"But Kaymookâm," interposed the Envoy, "you have not replied to *my* last ques-

tion,"—and he repeated it. "In the name of Allah," exclaimed the minister; "have you also, Elchee, a mind to kill me? Here am I, spent and hungry, faint for food, and one of you forbids me to eat everything I can fancy, while the other will not give me time to devour a morsel if I had it before me; and there—there stands that rascal—he'll not budge, a foot, to bring me a bit of food. What have you got for me, sirrah?"—"Nothing, my lord."—"What! nothing?"—"No, Aga; the time of meals is over, and there is nothing now prepared."—"By your own head, Kaymookâm, the fellow must be making game of you," said I, laughing, "when he tells you such a story. What! the house of the Kaymookâm, whose *mehmankhaneh* (establishment for the entertainment of guests) is the largest in Persia, without the means of giving its master a breakfast?"—"Ah," replied the minister, "the mehmankhaneh is quite a distinct affair—its accounts are all kept separately—but here, you fellow! can't you get me some eggs?—I may eat eggs, Doctor?"—"Certainly, Kaymookâm."—"And cheese."—"Hum! the less of that the better."—"Umph!—well, then, get a large lot of eggs and bread, and a little cheese, too; do you hear—the Doctor says you may,"—with a quizzical look at the Doctor—and having thus issued his orders for the repast, he began to joke away and frolic in his discourse just like a boy escaped from school for an hour—quite delighted to get rid, even for a few minutes, of the subject which was so disagreeable to him.

In due time the breakfast came—a huge plate of

boiled eggs, a small one of cheese, with fine white bread, and in addition, there was a great bowl of broth with the meat in it, which had, we were told, been thus opportunely sent by some lady of the King's harem. But his Excellency attached himself to the eggs, which he devoured with admirable perseverance, confining himself, however, to the yolks. It was not a pleasant sight, I must say, though sufficiently ludicrous. A Peishkhidmut chipped the shells, and peeling the eggs, handed them to his master, who, leaning down, cocked his short-sighted eyes close into them, like a magpie into a bone, and dragging out the contents with his finger, from the whites, devoured them with bread, but without salt.

"What think you, Doctor? have I had enough?" demanded he, after a considerable period of this employment; "see, I am four eggs short of the dozen, yet!" "The Kaymookâm best knows the capacity of his own stomach," remarked the Doctor with an arch smile; "but among us, one-third of what you have eaten would be considered a very sufficient meal."—"Wullah?" again ejaculated the minister with a sort of interrogative grunt. "But I dare say," added the Doctor, laughing, "if the Kaymookâm desires it, another yolk will not do *much* more harm."—"No, no!" replied his Excellency, "I could, but I 'll not; and see, I have scarcely touched this *yekhnee*, for fear of you; I consider myself as keeping fast on this occasion, under your directions."

At length the breakfast things were cleared away, and with a sorely unwilling air and mind, the minis-

ter turned his attention once more to business; and I wish I could explain to you the innumerable diplomatic twistings and windings to which he had recourse, in order to avoid giving plain answers to plain questions. The affair remained unarranged; but his Excellency appointed another audience with the Envoy, at which none were to be present; and gave vent to a sort of threat, which showed many more difficulties in the vista beyond. We left him thoroughly wearied and worn out, ourselves being little less so, after a worrying-match of full four hours. I dare say I have imparted some of the fatigue we felt to you, and that you will not be sorry that the interview is over. But these scenes appear to me to afford curious peeps into Persian manners and character, and therefore to be worth giving. They amused me, too, from the whimsical comparisons they afford between society here and its corresponding grades and ranks in more civilized countries. Fancy, for instance, Lord Melbourne or Lord Palmerston gabbling such trash, or eating eggs with his fingers, or cracking jokes with a page or a footman, during an interview with a foreign ambassador on important business. What a ludicrous turn does it give to the whole affair!

February 25.—This day I accompanied the Envoy to wait upon the Shah. His Majesty received us very graciously, in the *Imarut-e-Bilour*, or Crystal-palace; so called, from the quantity of cut-glass and crystals with which it is ornamented, and with which, in the time of the late King, it was nearly as much filled as the shop of Blades or Phillips.

The King sat upon the ground, plainly, though handsomely, dressed, and beside him stood the beautiful jewelled throne, on which, on state occasions, his grandfather used to sit. Nothing occurred during the conversation, calculated to raise our opinion of his Majesty's abilities or penetration; but, in fact, what can be made of these audiences of ceremony, where nothing passes beyond the mere expression of common-place sentiments, and the enunciation of general questions and replies?

His Majesty made inquiry as to the countries I had seen since I left Tabreez, where he was graciously pleased to recollect having seen me, as well as at Muzzeenoon; and hearing that I had been travelling among the Arabs, favoured us with an opinion, that these Arabs were a wonderfully brave, powerful, and enterprizing people. His Majesty is not, perhaps, the only great man who makes this mistake.

A more interesting interview was in store for me in the evening, and yet I hesitate to take you there, lest you throw down the paper in disgust, for "Lo! where he comes again!" It was still with my *friend*, as he is pleased to designate me — the Kaymookâm. You may pass it over if you please; but as it had its peculiarities, and more especially as it is the *last*, I will tell you what occurred as concisely as I can.

The Hakeem Bashee, Meerza Baba, called upon Dr. Reach and myself in the afternoon; and after some conversation connected with what had passed at the former interview with the minister, informed me that he desired to see me. The fact simply was,

that knowing me to be on my way to England, and desirous to be represented to the government of that country by every Englishman in a favourable light, he wished, if possible, to conciliate my good will and secure my good word.

I believe he desired to see me alone, from the consideration that it would be easier to deal with one than with more; but a circumstance having occurred which rendered Dr. Reach's presence in that quarter necessary, I was too thankful to have his company, and we went together.

When we got to his Excellency's house, we found that he had taken refuge in his bath — fairly run away from the overwhelming crowd of applicants for his attention, and the accumulating mass of business which seems to appal him, even while he courts it. To the bath, therefore, we went, preceded by the Hakeem Bashee, who went in to announce our arrival, while we waited in the ante-chamber. This was a dark vaulted apartment, like a dungeon, dilapidated in many places, and half swimming in water, while from the arched roof drops of the same collected from the steam that issued from the inner apartment, fell here and there with a plash upon the rugged stone-floor. One thought of the dungeons of Chilon, or the prison of Ugolino and his wretched children, as he looked around the dismal hole. A raised stone bench, some seven or eight feet broad, on which those using the bath undress and leave their clothes, ran round the apartment; and on this, until the minister should emerge from the interior, we took our seats almost in utter darkness, for even-

ing had already fallen, and the two or three bottoms of glass-bottles stuck in the roof, which admitted a crepuscular light during the day, served now but to exclude the little that remained.

In the course of a few minutes out came his Excellency, very slenderly clad, but having a large fur cloak thrown over his shoulders, and down we all four sat upon a little strip of carpet spread on the bench; his Excellency looking very much like an owl in an ivy-bush. He was evidently rather disconcerted at seeing the Doctor, but he recovered himself so as to express great pleasure at his having come; and after a few writhings and wincings, and digressions, occasioned by his reluctance to approach an unpleasant subject—as a boy makes wry faces before taking a dose of physic, he gulped down his disgust, and opened on the business in hand.

The conversation now became a repetition of the same puerilities and contemptible evasions both of reason and of argument, that marked the last; and seeing that we were but working in a circle, and making no real progress, I put an end to the discussion by a proposition, which had the good fortune to find grace in his Excellency's sight; upon which, instantly dismissing both the unwelcome subject and the clouded brow it had occasioned, he became lively and chatty, and appeared quite delighted to inquire about my late journey, and the state of the countries I had passed through.

This was an opportunity not to be lost; we seized it greedily, and both the Doctor and I commenced an account of what each had seen and heard in the

course of our peregrinations, and let the minister into a few truths concerning the state of the country, and the manner in which both he and the new King were spoken of—such as he had not listened to for many a day. Indeed, I must say that he solicited it from us, and when, after his having several times warned me to conceal nothing, I said, "Kaymookâm, are you serious? Do you really desire to have the truth, and the whole truth?" the answer was ready and emphatic. "I do—by your head, I do!" "Then," said I, "you shall have it," and we began; and the poor man sat between us, turning first to the one and then to the other, as we each gave him a broadside—just as I have seen in some dramatic piece a poor henpecked fellow do, who has got between two termagants that din him in each ear by turns, while the Hakeem Bashee sat looking on, uncertain, I believe, how to take it, and whether to stop us or let us go through with the business: it was a scene for a comedy, I promise you.

It length, having nearly exhausted our battery,—at least, so far as we deemed it prudent to go,—we begged him to excuse the trouble we had put him to, and asked leave to go. He assured us, by our own heads and his death, that he had been quite delighted with the conversation,—that it was not often he heard so much truth,—he wished he could hear it oftener, &c., which was all, perhaps, words of course; yet, if he was acting, I must do him the justice to say he did it well, and maintained the most admirable semblance of truth that can be imagined.

On our return home, we found that the interest of the day was not yet at an end; for a courier had arrived from England, bringing letters to many of our party from family and friends. I was not among the fortunate. In expectation of an earlier departure from Persia, I had already directed my letters to be detained at Constantinople, and thus deprived myself of this treat. But I was not the less interested in the great changes which the public prints announced, and of which only indistinct rumours had hitherto reached me. The whole ministry had been changed; the measures would probably be also changed. This could not but affect myself; but that was a trifle, as, thank Heaven, I did not feel dependent on any party; but as an individual keenly alive to everything affecting the interests of England in the countries I have been visiting, and to the great object of combining an amelioration of their condition with the most beneficial line of policy for Great Britain, I could not but contemplate with anxiety every prospect of a change of system. I cannot express to you the deep interest I feel in this vast and most important subject, it is as if my own private and dearest interests were actually mixed up with the success of those projects which, in conjunction with others, I have been so long and earnestly suggesting for the renovation and future prosperity of this most interesting quarter of the world. But to what good purpose should I weary you with the speculations to which the news, conveyed by this packet, gave birth? like the "bubbles on the fountain," they were

vain and empty, for all the questions they involved or depended on must have been set at rest long ere the news had even reached us; but what Englishman can hear of a political event, without spinning out of it a whole web of fanciful consequences?

February 27.—There is an old man here of whom I once before made mention, as having met at Abbasabad, on my way to Khorasan, Hadjee Aga, a eunuch belonging to the harem of the late Abbas Meerza. Ever since our rencounter in that wild place, we have been great friends, and the old gentleman has bestowed upon me a high share of his favour. I had seen him several times at Tabreez, and he had intimated his wish to give me a breakfast there; but certain occurrences, which compelled him to leave his house for a time, prevented this exercise of hospitality. It was partly to make good his promise, and partly, I believe, to give the Doctor and myself an opportunity of conversing with him regarding the state of the Shah's affairs, that he asked us both, this day, to breakfast, and certainly, so far as the first motive was concerned, he did redeem his promise, for his breakfast was an admirable one. A true Persian breakfast, one which you are bid to, (for the Persians, when alone, are particularly moderate at this meal), yields in nothing, as you may have heard, to even a highland *déjeûné*, either in point of copiousness, or variety, or excellence of the viands; and I doubt not, were one of the Hadjee Aga's morning meals transferred by the waft of a wand to any

party in the three kingdoms, met for the purpose of breaking their fast, they would seal their approbation of it by as rapid a consumption of the good things, as ever they perpetrated on the best fare of their native soils. To those who are nice in such matters, the necessity of eating it with their fingers might in some sort detract from their satisfaction; but as I never stand upon trifles, when with Persians, I eat as they do, in contempt of grease and dirt: it adds greatly to my enjoyment of a knife and fork when alone, or with my countrymen.

Hadjee Aga himself is no small treat in his way. He is a sensible kind-hearted man, and has a mild winning way with him that gives him wonderful power over his countrymen. The Aga, like many others, was the victim of jealous tyranny in his youth; and his misfortunes, with the excessive severity of his punishment, so much interested the late Prince Royal, then a young man, that he took care of the sufferer, placed him in his service, and raised him in time to be the chief superintendent of his harem; and I have heard, that while he held this post, there was not one of the numerous harems in Persia so respectable in its conduct, or generally so well managed,—no small praise this to the Aga, for I assure you that the ladies of these establishments have the character of being sometimes unruly enough.

But the talents of the Hadjee were not confined to the management of women. So great was the influence he possessed both over the mind of Abbas

Meerza and his court, that the present minister, the Kaymookâm, having fallen under his master's displeasure, Hadjee Aga was selected to fill his place as premier, which for some time he occupied; but finding the people whom he had raised to employments, caballing against him and conducting themselves ill, he conceived it to be more for his master's benefit that his rival should be recalled to power; and accordingly, the Prince, mainly through the Aga's persuasion, was prevailed upon to restore the Kaymookâm to office. Even now he is regarded as one of the most able and honest men near the person of the Shah, and has been placed in command of the capital as governor. But the Kaymookâm is so completely all-powerful, and jealous to boot, that I fear the Hadjee does not meet with fair play, even in performing the duties of his office.

I forgot to mention another breakfast to which the whole English party were yesterday invited, and which was excellent in its way. This is carnival time with the Russians, and Count Simonitch asked us all to breakfast on a national dish peculiar to the season, of which they are all very fond. It is a sort of pancake, somewhat like our crumpets, but thinner, lighter, and richer, being made of rice flour, and it is eaten with clear melted butter and caviare. It was certainly very good, but was far from being the only good thing which graced the Count's table. I had had practical proof of old of the excellence and abundance of a Russian breakfast, or rather dinner, for it is their principal

meal, and is served about noon; nor was the one in question at all inferior to those which still lived in my remembrance. In return, the Count and his suite dined at the Residency to-night, and after dinner we had a rich treat in the shape of several songs, by the Baron Korf, whose voice, a splendid bass, did full justice to many fine pieces of music, among others, to that exquisite composition, the Russian Vesper Hymn, one of the most beautiful pieces of religious music I am acquainted with, and to the still more magnificent strains of that part of their liturgy which contains the blessing of the Emperor and the Royal Family.

On the following day (the 28th) the whole English party joined Count Simonitch and his suite in a pic-nic expedition to the *Tucht-e-Kajeria*, or throne of the Kajars, a large garden and palace belonging to the King. It was as yet too early for verdure, though some violets were gathered and presented to the chiefs of the party; but the weather was charming, the air balmy and spring-like, and everything contributed to render the expedition pleasant. It was delightful, in fact, to get beyond the dull mud walls and bog-like streets of the town, and give our horses free head in the open country. We were truly a gallant company to make a show withal; and when we reached our ground we found there, all in readiness, a breakfast worthy of the appetites we had acquired. But I have said so much of breakfasts that you will fancy that I have actually got over fond of creature comforts; a charge which, if made, I most uncompromisingly repudiate and deny.

I can, it is true, make a very respectable figure upon occasion, at a well-covered table, or *sofra*, and, doubtless, long privation does in no degree diminish the relish for good food; but of any undue inclination to *gourmandise*, I declare myself perfectly innocent. Alas! these petty comforts offered but small consolation for the detention which circumstances have occasioned here to my progress homeward — here is now the last of February, and I hoped by this time to have been well on to Tabreez, if not past it.

On our way back to the city, we encountered his Majesty, going forth to take the air on horsback. He did not look amiss himself; but I think our own cavalcade was the more brilliant of the two. Poor man! that same afternoon, on showing off his horsemanship, and displaying his dexterity in firing at a vulture or a kite, when, at full speed, "the point of the world's adoration" came to the ground — and as large bodies, whether of kings or of clowns, fall heavily, that of his august Majesty received a sharp contusion on the arm.

March 4.—This evening, while the Envoy was engaged in conversation with the Kaymookâm at the Residency, a courier arrived from Sir Henry B. Lindsay, with despatches confirmatory of a report which had reached us the day before, of that officer having gained a most complete and important victory in the South, on the borders of Fars, over the troops of the Firmaun Firmaee, commanded by his brother Hassan Allee Meerza, the *Shujaat-ul-Sultunut*, that is "the valour of the State."

It appears that this Prince, having collected the troops of his brother, to the amount of some five thousand men, of whom eight hundred were infantry and the rest cavalry, with only three guns and one howitzer, marched towards Ispahan, with intent to occupy that city for the Firmaun Firmaee. That city, ever since the King's death, had been a prey to the utmost confusion and disorder. The *looties*—that is, the rogues and vagabonds of the place—a large body, had commenced a systematic plunder of the inhabitants, and had made the great mosque one of their chief storehouses of the spoil. In this it appears they were encouraged by the Sheikh Ul-Islam, a person of immense religious influence, but of a very turbulent and indifferent moral character, who, siding with the Ameen-u-dowlut, the late King's minister, was opposed to the cause of Mahomed Shah.

Sir Henry, when he reached a village about eighty miles from Ispahan, became acquainted with this state of things, and heard, moreover, that the army of Fars was hourly expected to occupy the city; on this he made a forced march, such as has not often been heard of, performing the whole distance and entering the city in little more than thirty hours. It was full time, for disorder had reached its height; but on his approach every *lootie* at once disappeared —order and tranquillity were restored, and the city preserved for his Majesty.

Sir Henry had not been a week at Ispahan, when certain intelligence was brought of the approach of the troops of Fars, and that the advance under

Nujjeff Koolee Meerza* had reached Abâdeh. It appears that Hyder Koolee Meerza, one of the Princes then resident at Ispahan, had immediately proceeded to acquaint Nujjeff Koolee Meerza with the presence of Sir Henry B. Lindsay and his force, on which the former halted till the whole army under his uncle the Shujaat-ul-Sultunut came up.

On receiving this information, Sir Henry, with that characteristic promptitude and energy which has not only gained him the confidence of the troops, but has hitherto insured success, put his force in motion to meet the enemy. Much did the Persian authorities entreat him to pause for reinforcements —to wait till even one more regiment should come up. "I did all I could," wrote Meerza Abul Cossein, a functionary of high rank, "to get him to stay till the next day, when he might have had the Marâgha regiment to join him—but in vain;"—a proof either of the said Meerza's incapacity or treachery; but in one hour Sir Henry's drum beat, and with two regiments of regular infantry, a few Toffunchees and horsemen, and twenty guns—not four thousand men in all—he was speedily in march to oppose the Princes of Fars.

On hearing of Sir Henry's approach, the Shujaat, who had with him six Princes of the blood, changed his route, and endeavoured to turn his opponent's flank by taking a less frequented road among the hills, by which manœuvre he hoped to reach Ispahan unperceived. But Sir Henry's information was too

* The second of the three Persian Princes who afterwards came to England, called the Wâli.

accurate to admit of this *ruse* succeeding—he made another forced march; and crossing the bed of a river, cut off the troops of Fars and forced them to confront him at a place between Komaishah and Muxood Beggee. In fact, the Shujaat did not appear to decline engaging. He arranged his army in six divisions, placing two to guard the baggage, while with the other four he faced his enemy. The infantry he posted behind the ruined wall of a deserted village in order that they might at their ease pick off their opponents, who, it was taken for granted, would advance to dislodge them. But Sir Henry wisely declined giving them such an advantage; and, on the contrary, took one himself, by bringing up his guns and knocking the wall about their ears with round-shot. These ugly missiles also brought down, killed and wounded, some forty or fifty of the men thus ensconced; and the rest, finding out their mistake, attempted to fly, but were all overtaken and made prisoners. The horsemen, seeing this, scattered right and left and dispersed, losing also some prisoners. The Shujaat, wounded, as some assert, in the arm, fled with his six Princes and about fifty horsemen, carrying off about ten thousand tomauns; but all the baggage, baggage-cattle, horses, camels, and mules, with guns, stores, and all valuables, remained a prize to the victors: and thus ends a Persian contest for the crown between two of Futeh Allee Shah's descendants; for the power of the Prince of Fars is so utterly broken by this event, and he himself is so unpopular, that there is scarcely any chance of his showing a front again.

The Shujaat, Hassan Allee Meerza, is indeed a favourite with the people, and no doubt it is chiefly his popularity that has been the means of collecting such an army. He alone, if any one can, may give trouble; but I suspect that the eyes of men will be opened by this defeat, and that they will see the folly of contending against a Prince so well supported as Mahomed Shah is, and leave the kingdom in peace. In fact, the wonder is, how so many men could be collected and induced to march, when the whole pay received by most of them, did not, as we hear, exceed a tomaun, or ten shillings per man. No wonder they would not fight—but Persians will go great lengths for the chance of a little plunder.

It was a singular coïncidence that these good news reached the Envoy and were communicated by him to the Kaymookâm just as that minister was treating in the most ungracious manner, certain most reasonable and, to Persia, advantageous proposals made upon the part of the British government. In fact, the man seems either smitten with judicial blindness, or resolved to ruin his master. Even since the period of my arrival here, the discontent which had begun to usurp the place of that hope which the bloodless success and good character of the Shah had at first inspired, has increased to a degree not only painful but mortifying; for we have reason to know that it is well founded. Since the Shah's arrival at Tehrân, not a step really efficacious has been taken either to ameliorate the condition or to re-assure the minds of the Ryots; and even the

temporary immunities nominally granted to districts that had suffered by the march of the army, have, in many instances, been recalled, or neutralized by subsequent and inconsistent measures. Thus, whole districts of the utmost fertility remain uncultivated; because the villagers are either afraid to risk the loss of what little remains to them in sowing for another crop, or really have not seed to put into the ground, nor the means of labouring it. The consequence must be a continuation of that scarcity, and even famine, which has for so many years borne hard on Persia. The troops, particularly the irregulars, remain in arrears; and they, as well as all other ranks, have their hearts full of discontent. Complaints, and just ones, are made, that no access is to be had to either king or minister, and this hiding of the royal countenance from the people, especially at the commencement of a new reign, is, in Persia, equally impolitic and disgusting: yet will this minister monopolize not only all power, but all work; for he is too suspicious to trust any one, and will do everything himself except what he gives in charge to his son, a youth possessed of neither talents nor discretion, but filled with presumption, and perfect only in the arts of venality and peculation.

In fact, as I have before observed, I do think the character of this minister has been strangely misunderstood. Skilled in the ways and characters of his countrymen he may be, and I believe is—and that he possesses a certain degree of acuteness and turn for business, I also admit; but that he is gifted with any of the great qualities which fit a man to be a statesman

and the chief counsellor of a great kingdom, I do not and cannot believe. He is restless and ambitious of power to the highest degree; but nothing can afford stronger proof of his littleness of mind than the apprehension and jealousy with which he regards all men and all measures not emanating from himself; in fact, he openly confesses himself physically and morally a great coward, and it would not be difficult, I think, to prove, undeniably, a narrowness of political views, an excess of prejudice, and a deficiency, or perversity, of judgment, quite sufficient to entitle *him* to the benefit of a strait-waistcoat for daring to assume so absolute a power, and *others* to the same for submitting to it.

At this moment, assuredly, he does bestride the whole kingdom, King and all, like a Colossus; and the slaves that walk under his huge legs are afraid even to look up towards the monster for fear of a pat that may annihilate them. His only maxims of government, practically speaking, would appear to be—"Take all you can from all men, when, and by whatever means you are able," and "Give to all and several as little as possible—even where more is justly due—nay, even when sound policy might prompt you to be liberal." Such is the ruler Persia has at present, and whom, in point of fact, England has bestowed upon her; for England it was, most assuredly, that placed Mahomed Shah upon the throne, knowing that the Kaymookâm was *his* master. No doubt England, in so doing, acted conscientiously for the best; for the Shah, in disposition and character, at all events, is the best of his family, and hopes were

entertained that the measures and system of the minister would undergo an improvement and expansion of scale corresponding to the enlargement of the sphere of his duties. This, assuredly, has not been the case, and now Persia blames England for the evil administration under which she groans. Our interference in the affairs of Persia originated, no doubt, in considerations of self-interest, but God forbid it should go forth to the world that these alone now actuate us in our policy towards her: in truth, the interests of Persia are now bound up and identified with those of England; for the stronger and more prosperous the former shall be, the better defence she will prove to our Eastern empire—the better customer to our manufacturers—the better friend and ally in all things. View the case as we will, there is no denying that England, by the line she has taken, has incurred a mighty responsibility to the Persian nation: let the pledge be redeemed, and let justice be done, as she values her good name in future times; the means are in her hands, let her not shrink from applying them, be the cost what it may.*

* The Kaymookâm has since paid the penalty of his folly or his crimes—by whichever name they may be designated. The King at length, roused beyond endurance by the state of subserviency to which he saw himself reduced, and stimulated thereto, no doubt, by the minister's enemies, on the 20th of June — little more than three months after I quitted the capital—caused the Kaymookâm and all his family to be seized, and all his goods confiscated. Six days afterwards he was privately strangled. Poor wretch! — it is said that when the executioner entered his apartment he would not believe in his sentence, and made violent opposition to the putting it in execution.

The sequel of the war in Fars may here be as well related. After the decisive victory near Muxoodbeggee, Sir Henry pushed on towards Sheerauz, followed at more leisure by the Moatimud and his troops. He reached that city with great expedition, and found it a prey to internal commotion, and quite unable to make any resistance. The Elkhanee of Fars, Mahomed Allee Khan, who had been affronted and pillaged by the Prince and his family, and who burned for revenge, chose the hour of distress for gratifying his thirst; and having heard that Sir Henry was close at hand, seized the avenues and gates of the city, and thus caught the Firmaun Firmaee, with his brother the Shujaat, and some half dozen more princes, fast as in a trap.* These were speedily sent off, under guard, for Tehran, to have their fate decided by his Majesty. On arriving within three fursungs of the capital, the eyes of the latter were put out, he being regarded as a dangerous character, while his brother Hoossein Allee Meerza, Firmaun Firmaee, being justly considered as a fool, and therefore innoxious, was suffered to go at large within the walls of Tehran among the other princes.

This, however, did not last long. Together with his brother, and the Zil and others, he was sent to Ardebeel, but died of cholera on the way; the rest

* It was at this moment, and just before the gates were finally closed, that the three Princes, Reza Koolee Meerza, Nijeff Koolee Meerza, and Timour Meerza, who afterwards made their way to England, escaped, together with some of their brothers and uncles, as related in the narrative of their residence in England by the author of the present work.

reached their destination. Others soon joined them in that state-prison. About the 1st of July, eight of the royal uncles were seized and sent off; among them were Allee Nuckee Meerza and Imaum Verdee Meerza, who had taken so conspicuous a share in support of the Zil, together with the Prince-governors of Bostam Kerman, Kermansha, (Mahomed Hoossein Meerza,) Malayer and Booroojeerd; so that nearly every one of the royal blood from whom danger was to be expected, except, perhaps, Hoolakoo Meerza, son of the Shujaat, were now prisoners; but there was no bloodshed, nor any more extirpation of eyes; and thus may be said to have terminated the struggle for the throne, which remained in the quiet possession of Mahomed Meerza.

March 5.—This day we all accompanied the Envoy to congratulate his Majesty on the important news from Fars; in fact, his Majesty invited the visit. There was a great crowd, both within and without the palace, but nothing of consequence took place at the salaam. His Majesty was good-humoured and weak as usual, and was dressed in shawl-clothes of sober colour, and without jewels. He affects much of the dervish, and, consequently, a contempt for finery. The hall of audience is certainly beautiful; the glass fountain in the centre, lustres hanging from the roof, and the walls all hung with large mirrors, bad though they be, made a fine glittering show; but the beautiful *moorusseh* (gold-enamelled) throne was absent, and in its place stood a sort of table, formed of Bombay inlaid-work.

His Majesty is by no means recovered from the effects of his fall: last night he sent for Dr. Reach, who found his patient in the bath, naked, head and all, except a waist-cloth—a strange fat figure. There were native bone-setters with him, and it was to see them and look at his arm, and to pronounce whether the elbow-joint was dislocated or not, that the Doctor was sent for. Dr. Riach, and the Hakeem Bashee, who were also in attendance, again examined the august arm, and once more expressed their opinion that the joint was uninjured; and the former represented to his Majesty, that from the nature of the hurt and the inflammation consequent upon it, the cure must be somewhat tedious—ten days at least, but that all was going on as well as possible. His Majesty then asked whether there could be any harm in letting the bone-setters examine the arm and try their skill upon it. "None whatever, your Majesty," was the Doctor's reply, "if you wish to be put to a little more needless pain." The King laughed, and going into the hot water, held out his arm to the bone-setters. After a short while, however, the pain they gave him was so great, that he called out, "Hold, hold! enough!" The Doctor then repeated his explanation and cautions, and left his Majesty, by no means confident that he would not again have recourse to his native surgeons: such is the satisfaction to be derived from attending on natives in Persia.

This day I was gratified by a visit from my good friend Moollah Mehdee, the Ketkhoda of the Jews, in Mushed, of whom I wrote you from that place—

a good, honest fellow, who was both attentive and useful to me. A deplorable account he gives of that province. Not a place now remains in the Prince's possession, except the three cities of Nishapour, Subzawar, and Mushed; all others, on hearing of the late King's death, turned *yaghee*, (rebellious,) and, expelling the troops, took possession of the forts and towns. I was sorry to find that my old friends, Nejeff Allee Khan, of Boojnoord, and his son Jaffer Koolee Khan, had both been "eating dirt," and were among the principal recusants. It appeared, moreover, that my host and acquaintance, Abbas Koolee Khan, of Deregez, had been maintaining his right to the title of *Dellee Khan*, (the *mad* Khan,) which he had formerly obtained, and had reaped the fruits of it. After I quitted camp, a peace had been patched up by means of money and presents; but either Prince Kahraman Meerza or his minister, being dissatisfied with the terms, the former had led an army in person against Mahomedabad, and attempted to take it by assault, but suffered a repulse, with the loss of two or three hundred killed and wounded; among the latter of whom was Moheb Allee Khan, a colonel of the serbauz, whom I knew well. Next day, to the surprise of all, in came the Dellee Khân to the royal camp and gave himself up, and he accordingly was sent prisoner to Mushed. The government of Mahomedabad was then given to Moheb Allee Khan, who, however, held it not long, for on the news of the Shah's death, the Deregezees rose in a body, and turning out the colonel and his men, hold the place for whomsoever they may

choose to recognise as their chief. This is a specimen of the Khorasanees, and the Shah will have enough to do to put a sufficient bridle in their mouth. He declares, however, he will try, for at the very last audience he told the Envoy that, *inshallah !* he means soon to move from Tehran. Farewell, dear ——; I must close. Where my next may be dated from I know not; but it will, *inshallah*, be *en route*, and my resolves are, I suspect, more to be depended on than those of his Majesty, for I am more master of my own actions, and have a spur both in the head and the heart, which will put even the jades of Persian chupper-khanehs on their mettle and to their speed.

LETTER XV.

Leave Tehran—Chupper.—Chupperchees and their Horses.—Suleimaniah.—Mahomedabad.—Lose our way.—Goomree.—Casveen.—Difficulties of proceeding.—Abhur.—Extreme Cold.—Dying Camel.—Sutanieh.—Zenjaun.—The Hakim of Armaghana.—Akhend.—Kafflan-Koh.—Meeana.—Severe Stage to Toorkomanchai. — Oujân. — Tabreez. — New Route. — The Ameer-e-Nizâm. — Hakim of Khoee. — Hollow Civility. — A weary Stage.—Snug Quarters at Kara Ziazeen.—Boundary of Armenia.—Tedious Progress.—Makoo.—Allee Khan.—A bitter night's Ride.—The Jelâlee Koords.—Bayazeed.—Diadeen.—Kar-Ecclesia.—Topra Kallah.—Seydee Khan.—Storm-stayed there.—Severe Struggle in the Pass of Dehâ.—A bitter Gale.—Hassan Kalleh.—A last Struggle.—Erzeroom.

Casveen, March 10, 1835.

At length, Dear ——, I have fairly broken ground upon my return. I have turned my back upon Tehran and its Shah, Ministers, Princes, Khans, and Meerzas, and all the *Nowkerbâb*, busily engaged in preparations for the coming festival of the Noroz, and have got so far upon my journey. You may believe that it is not without strong qualms of anticipation that I have committed myself once more to the tender mercies of "A Winter's Journey Tatâr," for it is still winter here, and the concomitant *agrèmens*, of lodging in stables and post-houses, of dirt and vermin, of hunger and

sleeplessness; but I have, as you know, many strong motives to urge me onwards, besides those of a private nature, and more connected with duty than I can with propriety explain; so behold me in for another ride of near three thousand miles through snow, and mud, and rain. And all this I should almost willingly endure, could I only make fair progress; but the delays and disappointments attendant on the season, and the state of these countries, add mental to bodily sufferings, and make fatigue doubly painful.

The late military movements having, as I have already mentioned, made a desert of the country between Tehran and Casveen, I was obliged to hire horses to go the whole distance, which is one hundred miles. This promised no great speed, nor was the prospect brightened by a sight of the animals which were to carry myself, my servant, and baggage. One would have thought that the necessity of keeping up an uninterrupted line of communication between the capital and the most important frontier province of the empire, the depository of the arsenal and stores, the nursery and recruiting-ground of the army, and the chief residence of the King's friends, would have induced the Shah and his ministers to establish and maintain a well regulated *chupper-khaneh*, or system of post-houses, between Tehran and Tabreez; but no such thing has been the case, and nothing can afford a better illustration of the manner in which all important matters are now conducted in Persia, than the state of this establishment. Although there

are *chupperchees*, or post-masters, appointed at due distances between Tabreez and Casveen, yet scarcely one shilling of the stipulated pay do they receive to maintain the number of horses required, consequently there is not one post-horse on the line. From Casveen to Tehran there never was any,—the old King would give himself no trouble about the matter; and when I received an order for four horses, on the post-master at Tehran, he came to me to say, that he had not one; that they owed him two hundred tomâns; if I could procure him payment of a part of that, he would get me as many horses as I liked, but without money he could do nothing, and so saying, off he went to *bust*, *i. e.* sanctuary. You will ask, then, how it is that the constant intercourse by chupper, maintained between Tabreez and the capital, is carried on? It is done by all manner of expedients, by coaxing, pressing, and sometimes hiring or *promising* to hire a horse, from station to station. When a chupperchee, by either absconding, or making a strong representation, obtains attention from the minister, an order is sent, perhaps, upon some unhappy village to furnish him with so much corn and straw, or money; and though he can seldom extract the whole, a little is in this way obtained, with which a horse may be maintained or hired on occasion. Then the situation gives a degree of influence, which enables the post-master sometimes to procure horses from individuals, and at others, assisted by the gholaum who is sent on the errand, he presses any he can get hold of, in the King's name; and thus drags

and lags on this most miserable system. As for me, neither choosing to press, nor having the means of doing so, I was forced to hire, and you may conceive the condition of Tehran, when I tell you that all my servants' exertions, backed with the requisite money, could only procure three miserable animals in all the town. The fact is, that the price of provender is so excessive, that no one maintains more horses than he requires within the city,—all extras are sent to the villages; and even muleteers, so soon as they have delivered their loads, leave the place, loaded or unloaded. An objection, moreover, is naturally made to hiring horses for a chupper journey, from its severity upon the animals; so I was fain to put up with the refuse of the stable, at the hazard of being left with my baggage on the road.

On the 8th instant then, all being prepared, I took leave of my friends, comforted myself with a last good breakfast, and after considerable delay, left the gates at nine in the morning, with an equipage which it would have done your heart good to behold. The piece of carrion on which I was to ride, staggered as I got upon his back, and I thought I could feel its poor bones grating together under me, as it moved along with difficulty. My servant had a larger animal, but with some frightful sores on the back, (indeed in no long time I received a hint that mine was in little better case), and my Turkish post-bags, or *eibehs*, were thrown across the back of a mule, which had no pack-saddle. Such was the set-out in horse-flesh

with which, after having for twelve months been accustomed to excellent animals, I was forced to take my chance of traversing one hundred miles of desert country; but *Allah Kereem!* as the Persians say, off we went, I and my various paraphernalia almost hiding the thing I bestrode, and my servant leading the mule, after a vain endeavour to drive it the way he wanted, without that troublesome ceremony.

It was just that day twelvemonths I had entered Tehran by the same gate. What a busy period had the interval been! how much of bustle, and movement, and anxiety! It was now at a close,—I was going to reap the fruits of my toil, and I must say, that as I quitted that same Casveen-gate, it was with little desire of ever entering it again. The air was pleasant and springy, although threatening showers which did now and then fall; but free of the choky sensation of city confinement, we should have gone merrily on, had our beasts been able to do so. *They* could not, and *we* were forced to content ourselves with a very sober pace. Passing Suleimaniah, a very decent village when I last saw it, we would have fed our cattle, but it was deserted; two men sat guard over the entrance to what was a palace of the late King, but they had nothing to give us; so we pushed on, deviating a little from the regular route, to Mahomedabad, a small village which had been deserted likewise, but a part of its inhabitants had returned to it that very day. From them we got some grain, a mixture of rice and wheat, intended for their own food,

at the enormous price of two sahib-kerâns, or shillings per maund, and having thus refreshed our cattle, we went on about midnight, in the hopes of reaching another village, Kishlac, by morning.

After plunging and floundering for some hours, however, among certain morasses and much deep mud, we lost our way in spite of the fine moonlight, and were forced to come-to and unload, and take up our quarters on the bare ground till morning; and cold quarters they were. The beauty of the matter was, that we were close to a village, which, from the barking of dogs and the voices of men, we knew to have some inhabitants; but we found a deep muddy rivulet running between us and it, which we could not cross, nor was any reply made to our frequent shoutings; so that we were forced to content ourselves with the open field. When morning came, we found not only a crossing quite close to us, but that we were within a very short distance of the road which we had wandered from, so we had lost time and expended the strength of our horses to very little purpose, and with very bad fortune.

Wearily did the hours drag on now till twelve o'clock; and often were we forced to dismount from our failing and hungry horses; but at that hour we reached a village about three miles to the left of our road, and the same distance from Kishlac, which we hoped to have reached in the morning; and here we procured refreshments for ourselves and corn for the beasts. It was wonderful the number of useless lies which the people we met

upon the road told us, with regard to time and distance, and the false representations they made, as, I believe, with a view of misleading us from the yet peopled villages; for they looked upon us as people belonging to the King or army, and expected nothing but oppression at our hands. When we got to Goomree, the village in question, we found all hands in doubt and fear, and more disposed to run away from us than to supply our necessities. Cultivation, as yet, was at a stand; they knew not whether to risk their labour and their seed, lest another visitation might destroy their hopes again. "First," said they, "came Imaum Verdee Meerza and his army, and he took what he liked; then came Mahomed Shah's troops and licked up his leavings; so we all took to the hills, and you will not find another village with people in it up to the gates of Casveen." The villages thus gutted and abandoned, became a prey to any one who was destructively inclined, and to the shame of their countrymen be it said, there were enough found to prey upon the skeletons thus left. I met whole strings of camels and mules loaded with the wood that composed the roofs and doors of the houses, which the drivers had stripped and cut up, as they came by unloaded, to sell in Tehran. The poor people who eagerly inquired for news from the capital, were but half re-assured by what I told them, and seemed more inclined to save the little seed they had for food, than to risk it in a crop that might be devoured while green, before their eyes.

The exhausted state of the cattle and a bad head-

ache of my own, induced me to make a long halt here, so that it was past nine o'clock at night ere we got into movement again. We travelled till past three in the succeeding morning, when we again became uncertain of our route, and, tying the horses together, halted till daybreak. We then believed ourselves not more than three and a-half fursungs, or fourteen miles, from Casveen; but whether we miscalculated the distance, or the rate of our horses' going, I know not; it was half-past ten when we entered the gates of that city, which, though not so completely deserted as the villages, seemed nearly in as great confusion and uncertainty. This excitement of feeling gave us an opportunity to observe somewhat of their political bias, which, assuredly, was not in favour of the reigning monarch. They enquired eagerly regarding the events in Fars, of which, it appeared, false rumours had studiously been propagated; for they were not only astonished, but evidently disappointed to hear of Sir Henry Bethune's success. Nay, some would not believe at all in the total discomfiture of Hassan Allee Meerza and his troops. The fact is, they spoke as they wished it to be. A very large party in Irak, including the capital, are strongly disposed to favour the pretensions of Hassan Allee Meerza, and are of course opposed to the present Shah; and it is only the firm support of the English, with the known and declared disposition of Russia, that have prevented their taking arms here in his favour—even the expressions of those who affected to be loyal, were uttered in a tone that

betrayed their falsity. This feeling of uncertainty and doubt, together with the absence of many of the leading men, had paralyzed the city—nothing was doing. As a specimen of the state I found matters in, I may mention, that sending to the bazaar for some kebaubs for breakfast, none were to be had; and I learned that there had been no *fresh meat for sale in the city for six days before.*

I found the chupper khaneh in possession of three King's gholaums, who had been waiting for horses some days; there were none, and they would not hire any. My arrival put them on the *qui vive*, and horses were hired or pressed, and in two hours time they were off. This did not expedite my business, however; I had from the first proposed to hire, but such rips alone were brought me as were scarce fit to crawl, till towards evening, when better cattle were produced; next, it was intimated that the road was not safe—that the Eeliauts had of late committed considerable robberies; thirty of a gang, who had robbed a silk caravan coming from Gheelan, had been taken, and were to be sent for punishment to Tehran; but still daylight was held to be better than night, to make the first stage. I compromised the matter, and started at three on the morning of the 11th, and crossing the plain after a ride of seven fursungs got to Gheriskeh, a village in the hills, about half-past nine. In two hours we resumed our route, which led among a very dreary course of rising grounds until we reached a good deal of deep snow, which greatly impeded our way. Issuing from the hills, we came right down upon the large

village of Abhur, situated in a perfect bog, from the overflow of its numerous water-courses, now all stopped and distracted with ice. The distance gone might not be much above five fursungs, but so bad was the road, that we were full six hours about it, and glad enough to get into a small warm hole in the village, where we got a comfortable pillaw cooked for our supper. All went well enough; horses were promised us, and, perhaps, it was well enough for our limbs that we did not get off until three o'clock next morning, when I found that we had fallen among thieves. While we slept, a spying-glass, which had been my constant attendant since I set out, was carried off; and though we denounced all vengeance of Kings, ministers, and Elchees against the master of the house and village, it remained unrestored. This affair detained us an hour, so that it was four in the morning before we entered upon the maze of water-course and bog with which I have said the village is surrounded for miles; but a hard frost had set in and bound the whole in icy chains, so that we passed over what otherwise had been impracticable, and entered on the long dreary plain that leads to Sultanieh—all deep, deep in frozen snow. Oh! the misery of these long, dark, foggy hours that precede the dawn! never did I suffer more from cold than on this morning: not only was the frost intense, but there was a wind, and such a wind, blew full in our faces over the tracts of snow, as seemed to enter the very bones and marrow, through all the coverings we could put on. I wore, besides my ordinary warm clothing, a heavy afghaur

poosteen, or pelisse of thick sheep's skin, and my head was wrapped in various bindings of shawl and *puttoo*; yet the wind came through all, striking the face and forehead like a sledge-hammer, with stunning violence; and as to extremities, nose, fingers, toes, one hardly knew whether one had them or not; and then that fearful numbing of the senses which intense cold produces, without rendering them insensible to pain; that deadly drowsiness of the very soul, which you cannot resist, although peopled with dreams of torture. They may talk of the comparative ease of dying of cold; but if the piece is to be judged of by the sample, so far as comfort goes, I, for my part, should chose some other mode of departing this life. Even sunrise produced but a very partial alleviation of our sufferings; for when it is wind you have to do with, there is no shutting it out or preventing its effect; and the only relief we had all the way to Sultanieh, a march of seven or eight, fursungs, which, from the depth and difficulty of the snow, took us nearly twelve hours to perform, was, from occasionally getting off and walking, a measure not easily adopted when the footing was so bad, wrapped up as we were.

Numerous proofs of the difficulty of the way, had they been wanted, were to be gathered as we passed along, in the skeletons of horses, and asses, and camels, recently picked, that had given up in the deep snow; and we saw one poor camel whose case was even still more deplorable. It had fallen down, unable to proceed, and been abandoned to its fate; but had so far recovered as to sit up, though not to rear itself

upon its legs, and a host of ravens and crows had already pitched on its back, anticipating their rights, by beginning to eat the creature, still alive. They had picked great holes in its hump and back, and the glitter of its eyes, probably, alone had prevented these from being scooped out; yet it could scarcely move its head, and seemed insensible to what was going on, though perfectly alive. Had I had a gun, I should have bestowed a charge upon the poor creature to put it out of its misery; not having one, I abandoned it to its fate, which, no doubt, would be soon consummated, as the night approached, by the wolves and the jackals.

I think, after this really desperate day, you must give me some credit for resolution and determination, when I tell you, that having got horses at Sultanieh, I started again that night, or rather at one o'clock in the morning, upon the same snowy plain, which leads to Zenjan. Fortunately, the wind was less severe, and more in flank, so that we felt it less; and the road was better, so that by nine o'clock we reached the city. Zenjan, seated at the opening of a mountain glen, and looking down its own long valley, has a neat and comfortable air, which, like most other Persian cities, is desperately belied on close inspection. It has suffered, too, greatly from plague, and from a fever, within the last twelve months, which carried off numbers of its inhabitants. Fortunately for me, I was not long detained here. Though horses are generally difficult to be had, money produced them quickly, and in three hours we were in the saddle again for Armaghaneh, across

a long slope of weary downs that form the skirts of the right-hand mountain.

This fine large village promised speedily to furnish us with the means of proceeding; but our hopes were frustrated in a great measure by the interference of the Hakim, Shikar Allee Khan, I think, who returned from hawking soon after we had reached the munzilkhaneh, and entered it with no small *fracas*, with a fine falcon on his fist and his greyhound at his heels. Inquiring, with somewhat of a contemptuous air, who the strangers were? he seized a cake of the bread that had been brought for my own and my servants' dinner, and, with a "no harm, I suppose," flung it to one of these animals. He then asked a whole string of questions with a rather insolent air of nonchalance; and, without one kind word as to providing either for the travellers' comfort, or speeding them on their way, turned on his heel and left the place to shut himself up in the harem. That he so far impeded my movements as to fix a still higher price on the horses hired to me, there was as little doubt, as that one of them, if not more, came from his own stable; and it was not till three in the morning of the 14th, and after a vexatious nine hours' detention, that we were again on horseback.

Our ride to Ak-Kend, our next stage, of nine hours, led us over a most uninteresting country, with much snow; and when we got there, there was neither chupperchee nor horses, so that we were forced to wait till evening until they came in from grazing in the open country, and then until they were served with barley; so that it was near midnight

when we started. Our intention was to have broken ground three hours earlier, so as just to reach Miana by daybreak—sooner would have been useless, as to get fresh horses at night, in the present state of the country, would have been impossible. It was nearly as well as it was; for the horses being pretty good, we performed the six or seven fursungs in about eight hours, crossing the Kafflan Koh and the river Kizzilozun, and reaching Miana about half-past seven on the next morning. At this place, celebrated for its bugs and fever, as you have already learned, and sorely harassed by the passage of the troops, we were fortunately detained but a very short time; horses, such as they were, were immediately procured, and, after a hasty breakfast, we set forth, just at the commencement of a snow-storm that had been brewing all the first part of the morning, upon one of the longest and most wearisome stages of the whole road. It is a succession of heights and hollows, deep and abrupt, for the first dozen of miles, and then a very irregular but constant ascent to a higher district, which at this season is always deeply covered with snow. It would have been better for our speed and comfort had we waited an hour longer to get better nags; for no sooner had we put ourselves *en route* than it became obvious that those we had would never carry us to Toorkomanchai. The drizzling sleet and snow that blew in our faces, too, did us anything but good; for it soon rendered the road so greasy and slippery that neither man nor horse could get along it without the greatest labour. One of our horses did actually give up by the time we had

made two-thirds of the way, and my servant had to walk half of it that his might not do the same: yet, at the outset, had we not interfered, their humane and judicious owner would have got upon the back of the loaded horse in addition to the heavy burthen it already bore. Oh! little can those who have not suffered under such an infliction, conceive the mental weariness and bodily distress of sitting ten or twelve mortal hours in cold and wet, flogging on a parcel of miserable yaboos, galled and lame, and lean, and lazy; himself bestriding one of the same class, every moment expecting them to give up the ghost, or their work, at least, in the middle of a long, dreary, desert stage, with night and a storm coming on, and no hope of help nearer than the village he has left some fifteen or sixteen miles behind, or that he seeks, rather than hopes to reach, Heaven knows how far ahead. The situation itself, independent of bodily discomfort, is perplexing enough; for what, after all, is to be done in case of the worst occurring?—but, when this unceasing source of dread is aggravated by the uncomfortable fancies and fears that will arise in the mind from ugly anticipations, and when, instead of sitting at ease upon a decent-going animal, your every muscle is kept in agitation, corresponding with that of the mind—kicking, thumping, whipping on the half-dead beast you bestride—the aggregate of distress becomes by no means jesting matter, particularly when your only consolation is, that, should the result be better than your hopes, and should you reach your stage in safety, you have just the prospect of a repetition of the same work, with the additional

agrémens of night, and the aforesaid storm to aid you in your efforts.

On the present occasion, after sore fighting through mud and melted snow, we reached our munzil of Toorkomanchai about six in the evening, *minus* one horse; and, pending the production of fresh cattle, lay down to take a little rest; and as my servant had been a good deal worn out by bustling for horses at the past stages, he naturally overslept himself, and it was two in the morning of the 16th before we were in the saddle again. It was still snowing, and we had before us that long and weary stage to *Thikmadash*, so well known to travellers on this road, and to me, in particular, as you may remember, which lies on the southern skirts of the lofty hills of Khalkhal and Heshtrood, and consists of a never-ending succession of deep hollows and rapid rises. Here, too, we had again to contend with deep snow, which, at a point well known to me of old, the caravanserai *Dawatgeer*, was exceedingly perplexing. The horses floundered sadly, for the old tracks had been filled up by the new snow and drift, and the guides had to prick with their sticks for a path. We should have made bad work of it, after all, had we not, most fortunately, met with a large caravan of mules just beyond the caravanserai, and in their tracks, after passing them, we proceeded with comparative ease. The seven fursungs, nevertheless, occupied us ten hours, for it was noon when we reached the village of Thickmadash, weary enough, and glad to set foot to ground, even for an hour; in fact, we only rested two—horses were procured here with only that much delay, and

we went merrily on to Oojan, three fursungs further, on a beaten track. Here we fed our nags; and, resuming our way about eleven, found ourselves, by dawn of the morning of the 17th, just coming down upon the village of Bosmeitch, not above ten miles from Tabreez. The consciousness of our vicinity to that desired goal seemed to inspire our jaded horses as well as ourselves with vigour; and by a little past nine, I had the pleasure of finding myself comfortably seated at the breakfast table of my friend Captain Shiel.

As there is no rest for the chupper traveller any more than for the wicked, I could only afford myself a snatch of this comfort. The ensuing day saw the arrangements for the next stage of my journey complete; and by a little after five on the morning of the 19th, I was once more on horseback, passing through the gate of Tabreez on my way to Erzroom. This track of country, in length four hundred miles at least, and leading over some of the highest land both in Azerbijân and Armenia, had been the scene of so much suffering and delay on my former journey, that I resolved, if possible, to vary my route, and to go by a lower road which had been indicated to me at Bayazeed, upon that occasion, but on which it was feared there might be a difficulty in obtaining horses. There had been, it is true, some disturbances arising from the discontents, or rather the despair, of the Jelallee Koords, who having, in consequence of their depredations, become objects of displeasure and dislike to the three powers whose territories meet about the base of

mount Ararat, viz. Persia, Russia, and Turkey, and driven like wild beasts from the more habitable regions belonging to them all, had taken up their abodes among the snows and rocks of Ararat and the neighbouring mountains; and who, issuing from them, infested the roads and plundered such travellers as they fell in with. On inquiring of the authorities of Tabreez, I was informed that these had been entirely put down; the Ameer Nizam himself, governor of Azerbijân, told me that all was quiet; that troops were regularly stationed there for the protection of the roads; and that he would give me letters which would insure a supply of horses on the way. Thus fortified, I set out with hopes sanguine, though chastened by the constant experience I had had of the inefficacy of great men's assistance, as well as the fallacy of their promises; but the Ameer Nizam was a frank gentlemanly person; he was, moreover, somewhat interested in my speedy progress, and *should* be lord paramount in his own domains: and so I did trust somewhat to his proffered aid.

We reached Khoee, one hundred miles, with ease, in two days, on the same horses; and I delivered, without delay, my letters from the Ameer Nizam to the governor Hâtim Khan. It would have been far better had I let it alone. The great man received me with a most offensive parade of condescension; professed himself my devoted slave; listened to my request for horses, and a lodging to occupy till they should be ready; and then having, with the same mock humility, requested to

know if there were any other services he could perform, sent a furosh to take us to the ketkhodah of the town, who was instructed, in mercantile phrase, "to do the needful." This functionary, somewhat like his master, made a great fuss and many professions; but after we had stood half an hour in the street, and threatened to go to a caravanserai, (which we ought to have done at first,) the matter terminated in our being thrust into a dirty old lumber-room of some half-ruined house belonging to government, where I was left to my own cogitations. Not the smallest assistance was afforded in the way of horses, and it was the unaided efforts of my own servant that procured me food, and horses for the next day.

It was eleven o'clock before we left this city, which is surrounded by a number of pleasant gardens, and much cultivation; in fact, Khoee is one of the finest districts of Azerbijân. Along this cultivated plain we held our way to the mouth of a valley that wound through the left-hand hills, and which exhibited a bottom flat and gravelled with the débris of the surrounding mountains: it was an inclined plain which led us gradually upwards to a pass nowise difficult, and which horses of common strength would have surmounted without the least fatigue. But ours were not common horses; they were the very refuse of Khoee, and the baggage-horse gave so many hints of tendering his resignation, that, in an evil hour, we resolved to turn out of the way to replace him, if possible, at a village not far distant. It so happened that the

little bit of mountain path which separated us from this village, was so much worse and more impeded with snow than anything we had yet encountered, that it did completely knock up our poor bat-horse; and on reaching it we found that no animal of any sort, except an old cow, was to be had for love or money; so that, after losing one precious hour and a half, we had nothing left but to shift the load to the horse ridden by my servant, scarcely a bit better, leaving him to the pleasure of riding the done-up yaboo. This soon refused to tolerate his weight, and so, lest worse should befall us, after two hours and a half more work, we came to the resolution of stopping at a village on the road, to recruit our worn-out cattle, intending to proceed to the next stage before daylight.

These good resolutions proved, as usual, more easily made than executed. We had at first been introduced into a sort of stable, or rather sheepcote, full of fleas and dirt; but a little expostulation with the Khetkhoda, and the exhibition of a little coin, procured our admission into the large and warm family apartment. I regretted to find that I was the means of displacing the ladies, who took to flight at my entrance, catching up as many of the young ones as they could in their retreat; but as I took up my quarters in one of their snug nests about the *courcy*, I found more than one of the chicks, which the hen birds had dropped in their haste, and which were not reclaimed until long after, when the little creatures awaking, and finding themselves alone, set up a roar that discovered their place of retreat.

It was daylight ere we could gather our party, and then we went down a sort of valley into which we had entered, for about four miles, to a fine large village on the banks of an ample stream, which waters an extensive plain. The village was named Kara-Ziazeen, and contained, perhaps, two hundred houses, the plain, that of Char-Pareh, and the river, which, I believe, took the same name, issued from a dark pass to lose itself in another below. Looking back, we saw the smaller village of our last night's lodging lying at the foot of a noble, lofty, snow-clad mountain, or rather range of mountains, called Sheeree-Khaneh, which, I believe, at this point separates Azerbijân from Armenia: we had now entered the latter.

Prosperous and large as our village appeared, and fortified as we were with letters and attendants from all the authorities, we, nevertheless, were refused horses on our first application; and it was not until the production of coin in a visible and tangible shape had convinced the villagers that we intended to pay honestly for all we got, that two sorry yaboos, and a good mule for the baggage, were brought forth, so that it was eleven o'clock before we were again under weigh. Our ride, for a long time, was most uninteresting, over and among a succession of gravelly hillocks and hollows, until rising to a considerable height we saw, lying on our left hand, the dark and lofty mountains of Karabaugh, wildly clustered together, with their heads capped with snow and clouds, and the huge black crag of *Eilung Dagh*, or the Serpent Moun-

tain projecting out before them like some gigantic champion stepping forth from a host to challenge an attack. In front, stretched out the plains of Nakshiwan and Shereer, which I well remembered traversing; as also the heights of Aberân, in the distance. The mighty Ararat had veiled his face in storm; and retired from the scrutiny or admiration of mortal eye, in a threatening mass of clouds. About five o'clock we entered the village of Sooffian, which is scarcely six fursungs from Kara Ziazeen, although it was with difficulty we got our wearied nags to the place, and I can scarcely express to you the annoyance of thus being forced to fight our way, inch by inch, winning from chance, as it were, every stage we attain, and looking forward to every succeeding one as to a like struggle, when every motive possible, both private and public, are leagued to press one forward. "Oh, that I could but reach some land where a regular conveyance, however humble, however fatiguing, exists!" was a prayer that was often breathed by me during these weary marches.

After the customary difficulties, refusals, denials, and persuasives of sundry sorts, we got once more on foot at four on the succeeding morning; and though we rode fast during the early part of the stage, it was noon ere we reached Makoo, one stage, which I therefore consider as good seven fursungs, or twenty-eight miles from Sooffeean. The first part of our march led through deep irregular ground, ravines, cut in a singular sort of rock, exhibiting strata like sandstone, but full of selenite and other forms of

gypsum, and decomposing into a species of fat clay. The fragments stood insulated in castellated shapes upon the summits of the hills, like battlements and towers, in very striking variety. Ararat was now seen in all his glory, with his two white cones relieved against a deep blue and cloudless sky, and was an object of himself sufficient to lighten the tedium of a weary way. I never tire of gazing on this mountain.

We continued mounting and descending alternately until we reached a small village on the banks of a considerable stream, which we forded at this point. Here, also, we met with a tribe of Koordish Eeliauts on the move, and saw three of the prettiest girls, assuredly, I have ever seen in these countries, who were employed in driving on some of the cattle, while the men walked lazily behind. During the latter part of the stage, we followed the windings of this stream upwards, along a narrow glen, in the rocky floor of which it had hewed itself a trough, so as to be quite invisible, except on close approach. Indeed, I suspect it sometimes runs under natural arches in the rock, as I observed a woman and two men pass it at a point where either bridge or ford could scarcely have existed. A little before mid-day we reached a spot where the glen contracts to a mere ravine, and this appears to have been held as one of the points of defence of the strongholds to which we were approaching: for two towers which have been built here, command the road and passage upwards. Turning the shoulder of the rock beyond these, we came right upon the place of Makoo, and

a singular place it is, although, perhaps, not equal to what a lively imagination may have painted it from description. On the left bank of the stream the rock rises in a scarp, to the height of some four or five hundred feet; and from a point, or rather line, about forty or fifty feet below the summit of the bank, there is a cavern or recess, formed by an inward sloping of the rock, to the depth of, perhaps, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet, by five or six hundred in length. Across this recess, at about fifty or sixty feet within a line, dropped perpendicularly from the overhanging rock, has been built a wall of stone and lime, which uniting with the rock at either side, forms the fort. In this space have been built houses, some of them being attached to the inside of the wall, which afford accommodation to the Khan and part of the garrison. The fort thus formed, is between two and three hundred feet above the level of the narrow valley, and beneath its wall, upon the slope, has been built the town or village, among the rocky ruins that have fallen from time to time from the scarp. The whole is surrounded by a stone wall, which meets the scarp on either side, and is strengthened with square bastions. The space between the wall of the fort and the back of the rock does not appear greatly to exceed sixty or seventy feet in depth, so that the accommodation it can afford for residence must be small. But there is in the rock itself a second hollow, rendered inaccessible by a smooth scarp of some fifty or sixty feet, and which, therefore, can only be reached by the help of ropes. This gallery leads to a series of

caverns formed in the rock, and capable, as I was assured, of accommodating one thousand, or as some say three thousand men, and having immense granaries, which are always kept full, and a perennial stream of water rising in the rock itself. The inaccessibility of this interior stronghold, and its inassailibility by shot or shell, renders it, as is believed, impregnable; and no doubt, to capture it, if resolutely defended, would be no easy matter. Within, and carved on the rock, are said to be many inscriptions in an unknown language, and which have never been seen by any one capable of forming an opinion upon the subject; for the possessor of this stronghold, it is affirmed, receives it from his predecessor, under an oath, never to permit strangers to mount into the interior, or see the caverns. A friend of mine, Major Rawlinson, who was the guest of the present owner, Allee Khan, for several days, sought in vain to obtain this permission; for, though never positively refused, an excuse of some kind or other was always ready whenever the proposition was made.

The rock of which the bank consists is limestone, and the caverns are probably some of those extensive ones so common in calcareous formations, aided, no doubt, in more or less degree by art; but to what extent the outer recess may be natural or artificial, is very uncertain. Tradition attributes it to the work of the old Armenians in times of persecution, and, certainly, it has very much the appearance of a place of refuge from such evils. That it does not afford its inmates security from all mishaps, however, is proved by the following incident which

I heard on the spot. A boy who was sleeping with the rest of the family in a house within the fort, awoke one night in great alarm, and though several times put to sleep again, would neither be pacified or quieted, although he could not describe the cause of his uneasiness. The family partaking in his singular alarm removed from the room, and scarcely had they done so, when a huge mass of rock fell from the overhanging roof upon the spot they had occupied. So alarmed were the garrison at this accident, that they fired upwards of a hundred of the small guns of the fort, by way of trying whether any more loose pieces would fall; but none would move, nor have there been any more occurrences of the sort since then.

Allee Khan, the lord of this singular fortress, to whom I had letters from the Ameer Nizam, paid just as little attention to them, or to my wants, as Hâtim Khan of Khoee. He swore that there was not a single head of horses in the place, but that, if I would be his guest till the morrow, he would send to the villages and try to procure them. This not suiting me, whose purpose was to reach Bayazeed that night if possible, I sent my servant, Kerbelae Hussein, into the town, who soon returned with three horses, hired at a ducat a piece, it is true, but good stout beasts, capable of even a longer stage; so by three o'clock in the afternoon, no thanks to the Khan, we were under weigh.

Accompanied by a Euzbashee, or captain of the Khan's, as guide, the only proof of his attention to the recommendation of his superior at Tabreez, and

one for which I paid soundly, we held up the glen for a while; then turning up a ravine which is said to have been miraculously opened, upon some occasion, by the sword of Allee, we descended upon a springy plain, full of knobs and ridges of a sort of lava or scoria-like rock, which everywhere protrudes through the ground. This was accounted for by the vicinity of Ararat, to which we had approached very close, and whose sides everywhere show the same black crests of rock cropping forth, just as we saw them at Demawund. Having advanced nearly to the other end of this plain, we halted at a village called Bazergaun, the last in the Persian territories on this side, and the native place and property of my friend, the Euzbashee, who signified his desire to make me his guest for a part of the night, promising to waken me in such good time as should enable me to reach Bayazeed by sunrise. He also informed me that from this village it would be necessary to take some horsemen as guards; for the Jelallee Koords, in spite of the efforts of the Persian soldiery who were sent hither to protect the country, continued to infest the roads; and had, only a few days before, robbed and murdered some travellers on this very stage. To all this I had nothing to do but to consent, which I did the more readily as the sun was already set, the night very cold, and there could be no use in reaching Bayazeed, where we knew there would be a sore battle for horses, before daylight. Accordingly we dismounted at my friend's house, where every possible attention was

shown us. A rousing fire illuminated the huge apartment, where the whole family, from the great-grandfather downwards, were assembled, and we were, in due time, all entertained with good rice pillaw.

After a few hours' sleep, we mounted, accompanied by six horsemen of the Euzbashee's, about one o'clock in one of the bitterest mornings I ever remember to have felt; for not only did it freeze intensely, but a fierce wind blew right in our teeth, so that by no precaution could we defend ourselves from its effects. Even the hardened Koordish horsemen could not stand it; but would stop, in spite of the dangers of the road, to make a fire and warm themselves, and they walked on foot till daybreak. As for me, I endured it as I have done many other desperate days and nights,—grinned and bore it, but was at length forced to get off and walk too. When day dawned, we found ourselves proceeding along the foot of Ararat, and nearer to it than I had ever been before; for there was only a strip of marshy land and water, which seems to run quite round his skirts, and one or two ridges of the aforesaid black rocks, between us and the rise of his base. We continued thus to coast, as it were, this mighty mountain, for several hours. Great mountains, like great men, are, for the most part, seen to the best advantage from afar; a nearer approach only serves to discover those pettinesses and imperfections which distance concealed. Besides, they lose the value of contrast, which is scarcely less powerful than mystery in producing effect. Ararat,

viewed from a position so close to his base, lost greatly in grandeur by the fore-shortening of his height, and presented only a huge mass of snow and rock, without any noble features, or deeply-marked ravines or hollows, rising into a rounded top: his bulk was rather oppressive than majestic.

No sooner had morning broke, than our guide became urgent with us to push forward. We had seen the fires of the Jelallees on the skirts of the mountain, just across the frozen sheet of water, and prudence warned us not to risk the chance of their crossing to question us; so away we went, sometimes galloping, sometimes at a round trot, our guards pricking on a head to look out, or running races with each other and exercising with their spears, to warm both themselves and their horses. Fortunately we fell in with nothing disposed to molest us, although we did encounter a small detachment of some wandering tribe or other on the move, which, for the moment, threw us into alarm. A little before eight o'clock we reached my weary old quarters of Bayazeed, which I did not behold again without something of a shudder. We were in better luck this time: a long price got us horses by noon; and I rode down the hill rather glad to escape the inquiries of my old friends, who might possibly have made some attempt to saddle me with the death of poor Saduk Beg, who, when I was here before, forced himself on me as a patient. I did not even ask after my old unreasonable Armenian host, Ohan; but gladly saw the romantic town and handsome

castle of Bayazeed vanish in the distance, as we crossed its plain towards Diadeen. The road was worse than that of the last stage; for there was more snow, and much of it in a melting state: but we, nevertheless, got on extremely well, reaching Diadeen exactly at sunset, and making out a seven fursung stage in a little less than six hours of time.

At Diadeen I found Khodadad Khan, Envoy from the Shah of Persia to the Court of Constantinople, who had left Bayazeed just before myself, intending to proceed on the morrow towards Erzeroom. This was unlucky, as he had already secured so great a number of baggage-horses, that we found there was little chance of procuring any for ourselves. So we came-to for a few hours, I think in the very same quarters which Bonham and I occupied, little more than a twelvemonth ago, and shut out the rigour of the night, for a while, by a rousing fire.

March 25.—With great difficulty and at a high price, an arrangement for horses was made for this morning; and about four o'clock, of as bitter a day as ever dawned, we took the road again, in spite of the guide, who refused to move till sunrise, on account of the cold. A long miserable road it was in deep snow, worn into caravan-steps, or over frozen puddles, the horses slipping and stumbling at every step, and every now and then plunging shoulder deep into holes in the snow. A most tedious twelve hours' stage—all snow and mud, which we performed in little less than thirteen hours, first proceeding along the

course of the Euphrates, here called the Moraudsu, and then among an endless succession of heights and hollows, into the great uneven valley of Topra-Kallah. A snow-storm came on to better the business, and it was long past four o'clock ere we saw Kar Ecclesia, a place noted in my first journey as a *munzil-khaneh*, like a great dung-yard, with heaps of manure smoking and steaming in the half-melted snow. It would have done a Lothian farmer's heart good to see it: but he would have been disappointed on a nearer approach, at finding the heaps of dung-like substances turn out to be pyramids of fuel on the round roofs of houses, whose goodly entrances, when you get among them, stare at you like the Cyclop's eye. I have described these spacious semi-subterraneous mansions already, so I need not repeat it here.

Upon asking for horses, I was told they were at my service whenever I pleased, but that there were so many bad steps, and so much mud in the next stage, that if we persisted in proceeding at night, and particularly as the snow was falling fast, there was little chance of our getting through; on the contrary, that we should but knock up the horses, perhaps lose our loads, and make far less speed than by waiting quietly till the morning. It was plain to me that the affair was settled from the first, and indeed the weather was enough to frighten any guide, even if we ourselves chose to run the risk. So I agreed to remain till an hour before day; and after a very sober repast and a dish of tea, went to rest, warmed by the breath of a multitude

of cows, calves, buffaloes, and other quadrupeds, as well as bipeds; in fact, the place grew so hot and airless, that I was forced to rise and get the air-hole above opened in order to breathe.

The people of the posthouse here were particularly civil, and I remember that they were so on our journey outward last year. They partake somewhat of the Turkish manners, and shave the beard like them; this, perhaps, is owing to their being governed by a Turkish Beg, who rules, I have an idea, with pretty full authority. I found that not even a lodging was to be had without the assistance of their chiaooshes, and the person with whom we were to deal for horses was pointed out by these officials. Their physiognomy, I think, is different from that of the Koords of Persian Koordistan—the nose is larger and coarser, though still aquiline, and the under jaw and jowl particularly full. They wear on their heads conical felt caps, wound round with handkerchiefs of blue, with red or white spots, often crossed by a second of some other gay colour. Their huge and often highly-embroidered shulwars reach almost to the shoulders, enveloping all the person, and meeting the little Mamluc jacket, while their legs are cased either in wide boots or sandals, called châroklis.

March 26.—A most ill-timed search for a pack-saddle, which, in spite of the perfect state of preparation boasted of by the postmaster last night, proved to be wanting, consumed a precious morning hour, so that it was near six ere we mounted; and a more wretched set-out to perform a villanous stage we never had. The load-horse gave up, and fairly lay down

twice before we had gone a fursung, so that we were forced to make a change with the guide's horse, which, being a favourite, he strongly objected to. Then my servant's horse fell lame; and after falling with him twice or thrice in the snow, sunk, or lay, down with him in a deep pool, so that the poor fellow was drenched with ice and water—no pleasant thing on a bitter morning—and was forced to walk the best part of the stage to preserve vital heat. Assuredly, the people of the posthouse were right in their account of the stage; for a viler collection of mud, morass, snow, and ice never was mingled together to puzzle poor travellers. The stage to Toprakallah, which is scarcely five fursungs, occupied us full six hours, and was only performed in that time by dint of hard thrashing.

After sundry attempts at Toprakallah to put us off with cattle that would have left us in the lurch before they had gone two fursungs—nay, after their having had the impudence to offer us two of the worn-out brutes that had brought us hither, as part of the required number, we were forced to put up with four little ponies, scarcely bigger than Newfoundland dogs, but stout thickset creatures, and in good heart—and they were likely to need it all, for the stage was one of twelve hours, including our old friend the pass of Dehâh, and all deep, deep in snow. It was three o'clock when we mounted; and we got no further than our old quarters of Seyed Khan (or Zeidecan, I do not know which is the right pronunciation), wading the whole way knee-deep in the well-mixed mud and snow-water that occupied

the track, and which retarded us sadly. When, per force, we came-to for the night—for there was no attempting to cross the mountain excepting with daylight—we were accommodated, as usual, in a stable, turning out some half dozen of Tabreez muleteers. We, however, had not any cause to complain of cold, Heaven knows!—it is heat and vile air that plagues us in these close over-tenanted lodgings. It, however, saves the need of many coverings; and fortunately so in the present case, for mine were all thoroughly wet with the splashing of mud and snow-water. I could not help being struck this evening with the wonderful readiness, if not perfect good humour, with which these same muleteers turned out of their warm nests at the bidding of my servant and the master of the house; and this was the more remarkable, as they had scarcely any other place to go to, but took up their berths among their own horses and mules in the stable of which my little chamber formed a part. Habitual deference to anything in the shape of a great man, qualifies even the brutality and disposition to gross insolence which too often characterize that class of men in Persia; and this with an indifference to comfort, brought on by their laborious profession, made the sacrifice of leaving a comparatively clean and convenient apartment for the immundicities and filth of a stable, comparatively light. For the credit of my own humanity I must say, that I protested against the arbitrary ejection of those who had a prior right to the room; but this was not listened to for a moment by my host, who calculated, no doubt, on a handsome remuneration for his ser-

vices. The rogues were more particular, however, in what related to the accommodation of their interior. The only thing they stipulated for, was permission to boil a vast black pot upon the fire that roared in the chimney of my berth; and from the bowels of this caldron, in due time, they extracted a pillaw of fine white rice, seasoned with excellent butter and other condiments, which made my mouth water as they transferred it, with all possible symptoms of satisfaction, to their own receptacles for food. I, for my own part, was obliged to put up with something far humbler, seasoned, however, with a good dish of tea; the leaves of which, after I had done with them, were boiled and re-boiled and strained and re-strained to furnish forth a pittance for mine host and his other guests. Verily my sugar also suffered no small diminution from their attack; but for this I had in some measure prepared myself. I had observed that a cup of tea was one of the most acceptable compliments to the postmaster and persons with whom I usually lodged during my journey—it was also one of the easiest paid; for if it was sweet, no matter to them how weak it might be; so I laid in a good store of sugar; and, after extracting what I required for myself from the pot in which I boiled my tea, I filled it up again, and throwing in a sufficiency of sugar, gave the whole concern up to their discretion—it was always completely and thankfully drained to the dregs.

March 27.—When we arrived last night, the sky, which had been thick and cloudy all day, threatened snow so much, that I had a strong presentiment we

should be stopped in the morning, and so, in fact, it proved. It snowed hard all night; and when at four in the morning we saddled in order to be ready, the snow was falling so fast, that it would have been madness to proceed until we should know how matters were likely to turn out. The muleteers who had also loaded with the hope of pushing through, and who did leave the village about six, were actually driven back, and came in, saying, that the snow was coming down as if from an *ambár* (granary, or store-house). So here I am once more fairly stuck in the snow, fortunately under roof, though, if it continue to fall, with the prospect of having the pass blocked up, and thereby losing several days; but "*Khoda Buzoorg!*" God is great! as the Persians say—we shall see.

The snow continued all day, with squalls of wind at intervals, so that I was forced to make up my mind to pass the day here, rather than in a snow-wreath in the pass of Dehâh, as would probably be the case were we to attempt to move. The night closed in with little better prospects.

March 29.—These last have been two bitter days indeed; thank Heaven, we are well through them. Yesterday morning I was awake at four o'clock. Snow had fallen all night, though not heavily, and was still falling; so we waited another hour to see if the weather would improve, and whether the muleteers would make a start. At the end of that time the guide came in to say that the weather was better—that the air was *khoosh* (mild), and recommended an immediate start. I had heard a roaring

in the chimney, and suspected that the wind was rising; and on going out to see, discovered that such was the case; for there were occasional gusts even among the houses, and sighings among the hills, such as presage a storm, and I ventured to hint that there might be a *booraun* (a storm of wind and drifting snow) in the mountain. But the guide, and another Koord who had joined us on the preceding march, said no—there was no *booraun;* so I bowed to their better experience, and we mounted just at six.

Wind there was sure enough, however, and it often brought sharp gusts of rain and snow; but the air was not very cold, and the snow below the hills was too soft to drift, so that the path was not obliterated. On the contrary, like that of the preceding march, it was deep in mud and snow-water, so that we made slow progress to Koord-Allee, a small village, two hours or fursungs on. At this place we learned that a small caravan, tempted by the mildness of the air, had gone on in advance, so we flattered ourselves with an easy march, as the path would be opened for us by them. Woefully were we disappointed. Before making out half a fursung, we overtook the rear of the câfilah, struggling hard in deep snow, their beasts falling at every step. We passed them by a great effort, several of their cattle having been plunged into the snow in the encounter, and ours being extricated with much difficulty.

In the same way we passed three different detachments; but by this time we had proof of the existence of a *booraun* to some purpose; for not only

did we see the snow drifting from all the white ridges above us, but many of the blasts that swept by ourselves came charged with frozen snow as large and as hard as small shot. As we were clearing the last party, which happened just at the crossing of a stream, the bed of which was filled with snow, in which we plunged and floundered for a full half-hour, these blasts came quicker and stronger, and the air was filled with frozen glittering particles which pricked us like needles, when dashed by the wind against the skin.

From the hollow we had just passed, there extended before us a sloping ascent of some two or three miles, along which the path might still be traced like a thread, and we had learned that there was still a small party a-head, unconnected with the caravan, whose foot-prints were visible in the snow. But no sooner had we emerged from the hollow, and opened out this exposed track, than down came the gusts, sweeping with tenfold violence, and so suddenly, that some of us, who were off our guard, were forced from the path into the deep snow beside it. As we increased our altitude and neared the peaks and ridges by which we were surrounded, these blasts increased in frequency and power, to a degree I have seldom known equalled—it was like the blast from the mouth of a cannon; so swift and fierce, that several of the horses and their riders were fairly blown down upon their haunches, or overthrown in the snow, and showers of ice came pouring on us from a distance, with a force that no one could face, so that we were often forced to halt and turn round

till the squall had blown past. All this time, too, the path was being filled up, so that we had to hasten onwards for fear of losing the track of our predecessors.

After a while we overtook them, to the number of some fifteen or sixteen, and as many loaded horses and mules, all at a stand, just at the foot of a sharp ascent, evidently deep in drifted snow. Here all traces of former paths had been lost, and they had sent forward two people who, they told us, had been pricking for it with sticks for a long time unsuccessfully. They were just on the point of giving up the matter in despair, and turning back to the village they had left in the morning, when our appearance revived their spirits, from the hope that we might prove better guides than any they had with them.

The young Koord and our own guide professed themselves able and willing to trace out the path, and I must say they set their shoulders to the work in a most gallant and scientific manner. Their practised eyes soon discovered where the old track must have run, and the young man leading forward his own horse, a powerful chestnut, set him at it, and he dashed and floundered through the first hollow in a very spirited style; but the figure which the animal cut after its tussle, and the fearful depth of snow which its track discovered, offered no great hope for those who had loaded beasts, of being able to follow, particularly, considering that we had the prospect of eight miles more of the same sort of work before reaching the top of the *Geddook*. In fact, so dis-

couraging did matters appear, that the party we had overtaken, who were merchants, still talked of going back, and I began myself, with no very enviable feelings, to calculate upon the probable powers of endurance of my own poor rats of horses. But the guides still continued confident; and taunting and encouraging by turns, prevailed on the merchants to hold on and try their luck.

You would have laughed, had you been there, to see the dispute which now arose as to who should go first in the path of difficulty; each man hung back on the plea of humility—respect for his superiors—it was not for *him* to precede — and when that shallow pretence failed, it was ludicrous to mark the transition from overstrained politeness to excessive abuse, which terminated in an attempt, by blows, to drive each other's horses to the task. Dire was the row, and many were the fathers that were burned, and mothers and wives abused black and blue; but as time was precious, we interfered and brought about an arrangement for the riding-horses, unmounted, to take the lead, after which it was hoped that the loaded beasts might follow. Our own were then dragged forward, as a forlorn hope, to lead the attack; and in spite of the snow being trampled down as much as possible by all the people on foot, the plunging and floundering were quite terrible. Some of them went quite out of sight, except the head, which was held up while the united strength of all parties was applied to dig the beast out. By degrees, however, the track became wider and the snow more solid; and after a delay of two full hours, this formi-

dable barrier was forced through, at a desperate expense of time and animal vigour.

All this time the storm of wind was increasing; the squalls were longer and at shorter intervals from each other, and my apprehension became strong that when we should come to ascend the steep slopes above, the quantity of drift snow which was pouring down from the heights would envelope us as we slowly mounted, and bar retreat as well as advance.

While we thus plodded on, speculating upon what was to happen, none daring to whisper his fears to his neighbour, a glad sound was heard mingling with the gale, in the tinkling of mule-bells, and in a few minutes more a few black dots appeared turning the corner of a height above us—it was the first group of a large caravan that was coming down the pass, diminished in size to mere points, by a distance which the universal whiteness and drift-mist prevented us from being able to appreciate. One of the curious effects of absolute monotony of colour, especially in snow, is to deceive the eye with regard to distance, so that dark objects of considerable size, a long way off, appear like perfect dots close to the eye. Distant as they were, it was a joyful sight to us, for it promised us a well-opened pathway for the rest of our stage. Only one puzzle remained, and that was how we should pass this great body without being trampled down or overset into the unknown depths of snow that lay upon the slope where we must meet; but, fortunately, just as the first of the strangers turned the shoulder next

us, we found ourselves at the foot of a little hillock, the summit of which had been almost cleared by the wind; and thither, although there was scarcely standing room, the whole party scrambled up to let the great advancing body pass without jostling.

I do not remember ever suffering more than I did upon this occasion. For more than an hour, while nearly three hundred loaded mules came up, made their way, and passed on, did we stand fully exposed to a blast which, for fury, I never saw equalled on land. The squalls came upon us swift and resistless as lightning, fraught with ice and frost, which mocked all coverings to scorn: so fierce were they that many of the horses were blown down, and others kneeled of themselves to escape their violence; yet so small was the surface clear of deep snow that there was no stamping about or taking exercise to keep ourselves warm. Oh! how often, as these wild blasts and clouds of drift swept past us, threatening first to annihilate and then to bury us — how often did I think of that deservedly celebrated and disastrous event — that terrible retreat from Moscow, and of the thousands of human beings who suffered in it the extremity of what I now shrunk under, even with many alleviations! How often did the gloomy idea cross my brain that we might soon ourselves become "*petits monticules*" of snow, like those which alone and speedily marked the resting-place of the numbed and worn-out soldiers of France in that dreadful flight!—I shudder yet to think of all we that day endured.

The caravan at length had passed; and knowing,

by painful experience, how soon the traces of the widest and deepest path are effaced by drift, I urged my party to proceed rapidly. So large a caravan as that which had passed, has an infinite advantage over any small body in contending with snow: they have plenty of men who, in doubtful places, can beat down a path at once, and the strongest animals are kept unloaded to send on in advance, to force a passage for the rest; and when the first are wearied out, others, in abundance, are ready to take their places. If an animal falls, a dozen hands are ready to set it on its legs again in a moment; and all work together to the end of advancing, with a perfection of skill and warmth of zeal which no private party can command. Yet even these are often bewildered and baffled, and forced to abandon loads and sometimes beasts to their fate, in order to escape themselves; nor do they always escape—not a winter passes without hundreds falling victims to their boldness, and terminating their exertions and their lives under a snow-wreath in some mountain pass.

It was confidence in their numbers alone that induced this caravan to attempt the pass to-day; and we reaped from their boldness only a short-lived benefit, for scarcely had we gone a mile when we came to one of those steep leeward banks, over which the snow-drift was flowing like a torrent, and here the whole white slope was smooth and unruffled as if not an animal had ever passed nor track been made on it. Our guides, however, were resolute and we were fortunate. I led myself for

awhile, and got six times engulfed over head and ears. The guides then tried it with like success; yet the errors of one served as a warning to the others; and by dint of unwearied perseverance we surmounted these dangerous banks, one after another, and reached the height of the gorge.

Here, though the wind would scarcely allow us to stand, we were in comparative safety—our toils were in a manner over; for all the fresh snow having been drifted to the side we had ascended, that which lay before us was almost bare, and the path in the old snow remained visible and open, so that we had little difficulty in reaching the miserable village of Dehâ, a long way down the mountain. At that place the snow was softer and less in quantity, so that though the wind continued violent and the night became bitterly cold, we were able to push on briskly to Dellee Baba, which we reached about six o'clock, after a most weary march of twelve hours, the distance gone from Zeiderkan being about thirty-six miles.

Dellee Baba, which we passed through at night on the journey outwards, appeared, as we approached it this night, a poor village, which, as we were told, had been much ruined by the frequent passage of troops when the Seraskier was stationed at Bayazeed in August and September last: but the houses seemed comfortable, though, like those of all Armenian villages, built chiefly underground; and such of the inhabitants as I saw had a substantial and wealthy appearance. On dismounting at the house where we were to be accommodated, I desired that horses

might be ready for us in three hours, to go on to Hussein Kallah, nine fursungs, or hours, further; but my good intentions on this, as on many other occasions, were frustrated by the weather. The sky to the north and west was overcast in the afternoon, and obscured the sun, which till then had shone, though with a watery lustre. The wind, too, which from Dehâ had been nearly in our backs, veered round to almost right a-head — all threatening a bad night, and such it proved with a witness. Before I had been an hour housed, it blew such a hurricane, with snow and hail, that no man could have sat his horse, nor could his horse have made way against it; so I waited, per force, till this morning, when the violence of the storm having a little abated, we saddled and set off about six o'clock.

Moderated as it was, we were scarcely able to face the cutting blast; for it had frozen hard, and the wind was loaded with ice. It did not blow in such sudden squalls as yesterday; but in a continued stream, now and then increasing, and never lulling; so that the expense of vital heat was quite dreadful, in spite of all our warm clothing. The way, too, was inexpressibly long and dreary, over waving downs with deep hollows in eternal succession; and though the road was good, our horses were so bad that we could not take advantage of it. It was so bitter cold that our guide could not bear it, and made an excuse for halting, about half way, at an Armenian village, where we changed one of our horses and gave the rest some corn, in one of the best and

largest houses I had yet seen. It was, like the rest, under ground; but had an extent and number of apartments that was quite surprising, and the wood-work and finishing were of a very superior description. There were at least four huge stables and cow-houses, opening into each other, each full sixty feet long, lofty, and roofed with admirable timber. They were much better lighted, too, than usual, and each had a chamber of *dais* railed off for the bipeds of the family, and raised a little above the rest. At the time we were there, the whole domicile was swarming with men, women, and animals of all sorts, that had taken shelter from the weather, and that formed a curious admixture.

Skirting the Arras, which we crossed by a fine, though ruinous, old bridge, and then pursuing our way over an irregular plain, we contrived to reach Hussein Kallah, by great exertion, about four o'clock in the evening, flogging on our wearied horses, and often walking ourselves, both to ease them and to keep ourselves from being frozen to death with cold. We were ten hours of time about this stage, which is, in fact, I believe, just that number of hours long, instead of nine, which it is called. At Hussein Kallah we reached the first regular posthouse of Turkey, and it was with sincere pleasure that I hailed the first appearance of my old friends the true professional Suragees. Horses were ready at call, and at the regular charge; but the postmaster told me that, though it was all one to him when I went, he would recommend me not to attempt crossing the plain till morning; for

that the path had been so totally obliterated by the snow and drift of the preceding day and night, as to make it impassable until a caravan should open it afresh. A Tâtar of the Pashah's, who came in about sunset, confirmed this account. He had been out from Erzeroom, only six hours' distant, since dawn, he said; and though unencumbered with loads, had only managed to reach Hussein Kallah, after twelve hours' hard work. He added, that it was through the mercy of Providence that I had not started before he came, as the snow was breast-high in many places, and I never could have made my way out. The keen wind which still blew gave force to his arguments, and I consented to stay where I now write from, at Hussein Kallah, for at least a part of the night.

March 30.—*Alhumdulillah!* at length, thanks be to God! I can date from Erzeroom; and although my last stage to this place has been one of the toughest bits yet, I am encouraged to hope that the worst of my struggles are over, and that I shall now get on with much greater rapidity.

We were out an hour before dawn, in a morning quite as bitter as usual. The first part of the plain that we crossed, was covered with ice; but we trotted on at the risk of our necks, till stopped by the deep snow that lay further on. The surface of this snow was frozen, but not hard enough to bear the loaded horses, which accordingly sunk through the crust up to the shoulder; and though we ourselves got off and walked, this did not help the load-horse, which was soon utterly knocked up.

We shifted his load to the Suragee's horse; and this also, after falling more than a dozen times and being cut to pieces with the ice, at last lay extended, as if dead, upon the snow; yet we were not half through the worst. The most provoking part of the business was to see, scarcely half a mile on our flank, a large câfilah going quietly and easily along the caravan road to Erzeroom; but what was this to us? we had no wings with which to clear the intervening snow; so all that remained was to persevere in the way we were going.

A wretched three hours we had of it indeed, constantly digging out the horses, and dragging the loads across the worst places, and shifting them from one poor jaded beast to another: but patience and perseverance will prevail, and by dint of these we at length brought our weary animals to the point where the road we were pursuing joined that of the caravans. All then was easy; our horses recovered their spirits, and we trotted along in the track, passing party after party, as we could, till about noon we reached the pretty-looking, but disappointing, town of Erzeroom.

On entering the gates I was stopped by the custom-house people—a new fashion towards Englishmen, and my baggage was carried to the custom-house, until released by the kind intervention of the consular agent, M. Zohrab. By this gentleman I was received, as on former occasions, with his customary kindness; and solaced myself, for a few hours, with the comforts of his abode for the hardships of the previous fortnight. On inquiring

into the cause of the impediments I had met with from the officials of the custom-house at the city gates, M. Zohrab informed me that the couriers in the service of the natives, as well as of the English authorities, had made their charge of despatches so often a cloak for eluding the payment of duty on the cash and valuables which they carried for merchants to the capital, that the authorities at Erzeroom had determined no longer to suffer this infringement of their rights, but to search the baggage of all couriers. The abuse of confidence might warrant such a measure; but M. Zohrab very justly observed, that it did not excuse disrespectful conduct to an English traveller, and assured me that the affair should be properly represented to the Pashah.

LETTER XVI.

Preparations. — Measures for putting down Thieves. — Unlucky Start.—Ashkallah.—Irâkh.—An old Halting-place.—Koords.—Snow again.—Elma Dagh.—Chifflick.—Sheerannee.—Familiar Scenery.—A gallop to Kara Hissar. — A nervous Stage to Kulee Hissar. — Disappointment and Delay. — Cold weather.—Coffee. — Baking. — Interesting Scenery.—Niskar.—Tocât. — Toorkhal. — A Dilemma.— Drowsiness.—Amasia.—Marsteewan.—Drekler Dagh.—Ride in the Dark.—Surmâs-e-Kiayah.—Hadjee Humza.—Successful Remonstrance.—Tosia.—Khoja-Hissâr.—Karajurân.—Karajillâr.—The Hour of Rest.—Humâmloo. — Bitter Night's Ride. — Gheriza.— Boli — its Plains and Pass. — Ducheh. — Severe Stage to Khunduc.—Wet Ride to Sabanjah.—Ismîd.—Change of Conveyance.—Custom-house Interference. — Rough Driving. — Reach Constantinople.

Constantinople.

DEAR ——,

You can imagine, though I cannot express, the delight with which I announce to you the safe arrival of all that is left of me once more on the right side of the Bosphorus, and can hail dear civilized Europe again; I say, all that is left me, for I assure you that the fatigues of a second Tâtar journey, in addition to hard work before, have left me little of the "stout gentleman" you once remember me: and grateful, fervently grateful, am I to the Almighty power who has thus vouchsafed to con-

duct me through a maze of difficulty and danger that I could never have anticipated, and has given me the hope — the rational hope — of joining once more all that I hold dear on earth! I have said civilized Europe; perhaps I should in strictness have said semi-civilized, at all events until the reforms of Mahmood shall have been completed, and even then the claim of Turkey to a less qualified epithet will depend much upon the schoolmaster who shall suggest and guide the great change now in progress.

Leaving these speculations for the present, let me proceed with my journey, which at Erzeroom assumed quite another character. Delay and danger had almost ceased, and speed and hard work were to come into play.

My first object on reaching Erzeroom was to provide for speedily leaving it, with the best chance of rapidly reaching "Stambol;" and I thought that this had actually been effected within the first two hours of my stay there, by securing the services of a well-known Tâtar, Cossim Aga, for a very moderate sum. But the court of the Seraskier is not less fruitful of intrigue than that of his master the Sultaun, or any other sovereign you please; and my arrangements were all turned topsyturvy before the evening, by a cabal in the serai, in favour of another Tâtar, and against my chosen Cossim Aga. A stranger could, of course, make no head against the decree of so great an officer as the Tâtar Aga, or head Tâtar of Erzeroom, who pretended that it was not Cossim Aga's turn for a job; but who, in fact, I believe, wanted a larger bribe than Cossim could

afford to give. I might, it is true, have disappointed him by taking a private Tâtar, who would have done the business cheaper; but as security and the protection of a government courier were things essential in my circumstances, I was forced to pay the price for them, and to accept of the services of Gunje Aga Tâtar, at a rate considerably higher than the terms of my contract with his rival.

I was happy to hear at this place, that the Seraskier (or Pashah of Erzeroom), who is a sort of governor-general here, on the part of the Sultan, and—a rare thing in a frontier governor—said to be faithful to his master, has taken some strong measures to restrain the excesses of the Jelallee and other predatory Koordish tribes in this quarter; among which has been the very decided and somewhat hazardous one of displacing Behlole Pashah, the hereditary chief of Byazeed, and sending Demir Pasha, late of Van, to govern there. Much is expected from the prudence, as well as from the firmness, of Demir Pashah, who, it is said, is in fact the contriver of the measure, and who purposes to confine his operations to keeping the roads clear of these robbers during the ensuing summer and autumn, by means of his own troops and of negotiation; but to hem them up, as winter approaches, between an armed *cordon* and the snow, so as to extirpate or force them to terms; and the success of this receives some colour of likelihood from the fact, that Hussein Aga, the principal Jelallee chief is now in prison here. By his agency, they hope not only to recover many of the goods plundered from the great caravan,

so as to relieve a part of the Seraskier's bond for 80,000 tomauns, but to bring the whole tribe to favourable terms. But many doubt his being able to effect this: they doubt the co-operation of any clan of Koords in the destruction of another; and aver that no troops but Koords are fit for the service. They predict, too, that he will have to contend with a great many more enemies than the mere professed thieves, and that the introduction of a stranger, however able and conciliatory, in place of a hereditary Koordish chief, however weak and inefficient, will be unpopular all over Koordistan; the allegiance of any part of which is at present more than questionable: in short, the croakers prognosticate nothing but evil from the measure; while the retainers of the Pashah, on the other hand, are in high spirits about it, and speak of the Jellalees as if already exterminated.

On the way I heard a good deal said about the business, particularly about Topra Kallah, and, assuredly, the measure was very unpopular. Demir Pashah will have, to say the least of it, a very delicate and difficult game to play; and instead of rendering the road safer, I should not be astonished at hearing that travelling was rendered more precarious than ever, by his efforts to make it secure. Time alone will show. As to the Pashah here, he is, I suspect, little better, so far as regards talent and firmness, than an old woman.

At three o'clock on the 31st of March, having bid adieu to the hospitable M. Zohrab, I left the gates of Erzeroom. Besides myself, the party consisted

of the Tâtar Gunje Aga, and two Suragees, one being extra, and not on my account; and I had reduced my baggage so much, that we had only one load-horse. The plain before us was nearly clear of snow; and though we understood that there was plenty in the mountains a-head, it was all long fallen, the track would be clear and the road hard, and, excepting "*chamoor*"—mud, from the melting snow, or from rain, we had every hope of making good progress.

Our start was not a lucky one. There was great delay in bringing the horses, and scarcely had we got fairly into a swinging trot in the plain beyond the gates, than the horse of the leading Suragee fell and rolled over, horse and man; and upon their separation, the former started off on his return to town, leaving the latter not a little bruised upon the ground. To catch him again, as he ranged free over field and plain, cost us an hour: but we made him pay for his prank; for it was then, on, on! along the banks of the Karasu, one of the branches of the Euphrates, through mud and spots of snow, to Ash Kallah, a ten hours' stage, which we reached at half-past ten; say in six hours and a half: it had cost us a sad cold nine hours on my journey out. In one hour I had swallowed a few fried eggs and bread and milk, mounted fresh horses, and was on the way to Irâkh, a sixteen hours' stage. A heavy proceeding it was; for the road was not such as we could trot at night, and there was a vile freezing wind that came from the side gulleys, so that the night passed anything but agreeably. Neverthe-

less, both Tâtar and Tchelebee slept a little, and only wakened well up at six in the morning of the 1st of April, at the old caravanserai, whence, on my first journey, I indited a pencilled note. It was at this time occupied by as ragged a gipsy-looking tribe of Koords as ever I saw. They made a gallant blaze of weeds and brush-wood, at which we warmed ourselves, while their ladies were making their somewhat simple toilet; and then pushed on, leaving a small matter in the hands of the squalid and tattered patriarch, which called forth his blessings. Our way had lain almost wholly in the valley of the Karasu; but about the twelfth mile it crosses the sharp ascent, where I remembered the Tâtar's quarrel with the Suragee, on which occasion we spent an uncomfortable night in a thievish Koord village; and then turned right up the valley to Kara Koulagh, or Irâkh, which we reached a little after twelve, having travelled the sixty-four miles in somewhat more that twelve hours.

Hitherto, we had not been troubled with snow—a precious exemption; but here the valley was full of it, and the hills in our front were like loaves of sugar. In the twelve-hour stage on which we were entering, too, were our two old friends, the passes of Ootloogh Belem, and Elmah Dagh; so there was something to put us on the "*qui vive*.".

We left the village of Irâkh at one P.M. with rather inferior horses, but got capitally up the valley and over the long waving ascents and deep snow of Ootloogh Belem, with a few occasional flounders; and scowering across the intervening plain, and up a

long stretch of rising valley, entered upon Elmah Dagh just as the light failed us. He did not let us pass without showing a spice of his ancient grudge; for we had some very hard work in the ascent, and lost our way more than once on his summit. It would have been a serious affair to remain there all night, as there seemed at one time to be a probability of doing, for the wind was very cutting; nor was it a pleasant thing to wind, as we were forced to do upon the frozen snow, along the ledges of the almost precipitous bank, which looked more formidable in the darkness of night. But the same kind Providence that had led me safe through so many dangers, protected us in this also, and we reached the valley at the bottom of the pass in perfect safety. Here again, however, I was out in my calculation, for I thought the village was but two hours further on. It turned out to be fully five — a weary length to get over with exhausted cattle. But it is wonderful what done-up Turkish posters will do; for we trotted the last three hours in capital style, and reached Chifflick at one in the morning, which was just an hour of time for every hour of space in this weary stage.

April 2. — On coming in, we went to sleep for three hours, desiring to be waked to breakfast; but Tâtar and all slept right on, and it was near five in the morning when I awoke myself and made a noise that soon brought the rest to their legs. The posthouse had been partly occupied at our arrival by a Euzbashee, or captain of the new Turkish Nizam, and his servants, going to Kars; so that

not only was my berth second best, but it fell to my share to be last despatched in the morning. The Euzbashee, very courteously, and in regular highland fashion, asked me to take a dram, holding forth at the same time the wherewithal, in guise of some stiff *rákkee*, and, on my declining, swallowed a good dose himself. He also invited me to partake of his breakfast; but it looked so exactly like "cat's meat" in London, that I had not appetite enough to do it due honour; and after they were gone, the Tâtar contrived to procure some nice hot puffs, or fritters, that answered the purpose much better.

Off we set, a little after six, with miserable-looking cattle; but they belied their appearance, carrying us over the six hours' stage to Sheeranee in three. The morning was pleasant, and the country pretty. It put me in mind of many parts of Scotland. The hills have a reddish brown tinge that looks like heather; and the *arbor vitæ*, or perhaps red cedar, with a species of fir, like the Scotch, sprinkled about in patches, with oak coppice here and there, gave it much the appearance of some highland places about Elgin and Forres; so did the stony soil and patch-like cultivation—but not the lofty hills!—not the snow-clad ridges that reared their heads beyond the closer landscape—they wakened remembrances of a more distant land and broke the day-dream into which I often fell. Spring was making rapid approaches — thousands of crocuses and other bulbous-rooted flowers were springing around — it was altogether a pleasant ride, and oh, how different from the last few weeks!

In half an hour we were on horseback again, and entering on the long and well-remembered sixteen hours' stage to Kara Hissar. Now it was mud, not snow, which we had to dread; for the whole low country was by this time clear of its winter garb. On our journey out we had been forced by the snow to take the higher route to avoid the drift-filled valleys; but now we took the low and regular road down the course of the chief branch of the Kizzil-Irmak river, which rises in these hills. The scenery was splendid —around us lay a fine, varied, forest scene, chiefly of pine and *arbor vitæ*, which were scattered all over the country, and clothed some of the hills to their summits, very like a Scotch forest — reminding me of Rothiemurchus and Glenmore. Beyond, on the right, rose the lofty and very noble range of Geumish Khâneh, that lies between this district and that of Trebizond, and a spur of which we cross. There were green, pretty, Armenian villages in every nook; and at our feet and in our path there was abundance of spring-flowers. The first half of our ride was delightful; during the latter half cold and rain came on, and we had much ascent and descent among very wild scenery. Then came the well-known mountain of our former journey, with mud as deep and disagreeable, if not as dangerous as its snow was then; and a weary way we had of it at last to Kara Hissar, with some sharp galloping over vile ground, which made my sides ache again. We performed the stage in twelve hours exactly, reaching Kara Hissar at half-past ten of as black a night as ever gloomed. A change of horses, even on the

well-regulated roads of Europe, is not effected so rapidly at night as by day; and two hours elapsed ere we had procured some victuals, and were again in the saddle groping our way through the pitch-dark streets, to commence a twelve hours' stage to Kulee Hissar. The postmaster, indeed, objected to our undertaking this dangerous stage, which is a succession of precipitous ascents and descents on the brink of the Kizzil Irmak, by night at all; and you may remember that my former Tâtar, Mahomed Aga, declined the adventure in the dark hours. Gunje Aga was less scrupulous, or more bold; but it was truly a frightful business. The river boiled far below us in ugly black abysses; and, really, the ledges on which our horses stepped, seemed scarcely broad enough for a goat. My blood crept once or twice as I found the beast's foot slip under me, and heard the gravel rolling down the fearful chasm. I do not know whether darkness increased or lessened the horrors of these places; for you could not always judge of the real danger, while, on the other hand, it *would* have been pleasant to be *certain* that the ledge you were treading was more than two inches broad. The light did not come till we had passed the worst, and what remained was bad enough. At all events we had no snow; on the contrary, we had descended into a new region where spring was yet more forward than above—the grass had taken a fair spring—corn, green as emerald, covered the fields; and the barberry-bushes on the wayside had their leaves half out. The oak coppice was full of lovely spring-flowers; one, in par-

ticular, a species of Hepatica I think, shone like crimson gems, or drops of blood, scattered among the withered herbage; and crocuses, lilies, and primrose varieties were abundant.

It was ten o'clock on the third of April when we reached Kulee Hissar, doing the twelve hours in eight and a half; some hard galloping and trotting on level bits of road made up for our loss of time on the dangerous part during the night. We hoped to continue uninterruptedly at this rate, and for that purpose hallooed out for horses as soon as we reached the posthouse. But no assenting echo answered to our call: the postmaster, with a thousand politenesses and soft words, assured us by his head that he would do all in his power to serve us, but that horses he had not; remonstrance was of no avail—the Tâtar went out to see what could be done—but neither he nor the postmaster could make horses, and so all that remained was to stay until they could be collected from the neighbourhood. In the mean time an hour or two's sleep was not to be despised, particularly as it could be snatched with a safe conscience.

While we slept the weather changed, and so violent a storm of wind and rain commenced, that the people began to demur about trusting their horses at all on a dangerous stage, the greater part of which, from the growing lateness of the hour, would have to be performed in the dark. Stories, too, confirmatory of the perils connected with night-work on such a road, began to be raked up, and we were told, in particular, of one Tâtar who had perished a very short time before, by falling from

one of the precipices into the river below. My own Tâtar, too, although he undertook the last stage by night, appeared unwilling to attempt this one; and while these matters were discussed, and horses were still wanting, evening came on with an increase of the storm, so I was forced to make a virtue of necessity, as I had frequently done before, and consent to remain until an hour after midnight, provided the postmaster, on his part, should engage to have all ready by that time.

April 4.—My acquiescence in the plan of remaining, removed, I suspect, the chief obstacle to the production of the horses; yet, as usual, all hands overslept themselves, and it was myself that awakened them at three in the morning, though we were not in the saddle until a quarter past five. The morning was coarse and showery, with a cold wind blowing as we left the village, nevertheless it looked beautiful in its strange little hollow, houses and orchards mingled together, with many of the fruit-trees in full bloom. After an exceedingly steep descent, we rode along the banks of the river smartly for eight hours, among earthy mountains, very lofty, but mean in form, and thinly wooded with pine, arbor vitæ, and oak coppice. Little rock was visible, and that little very destructible. I remarked several singular land slips of immense patches of ground from the face of the mountains, and some of them by no means very precipitous, down the river side. In some places, where the slip was incomplete, the earth had sunk in great hollows.

This is a mining district. We found mines

worked by a wild-looking debauched race, who inhabit a miserable village, by the way-side. The metals worked are copper and lead, I believe; but I had no time for inquiry. The Tâtar did halt, however, and going into a house which appeared to be the public-house and shop of the village, gave the black-looking landlord a wink which brought out a bottle of fine clear *Râkkee*. "Will you have some of *this* coffee," said he to me smiling; "this is always the sort I drink when the weather is cold." He quaffed two large cups of it, and I just tasted one, and found it far from unpalatable.

This shop, which might be known as such by the assemblage of heterogeneous articles displayed in its interior, tobacco, dirty skins of rancid-looking butter, &c., was also the bakehouse of the establishment. The operation of baking was being carried on while we were there, by myrmidons as black as the cyclops; and a very disgusting one it was. One fellow whose hands, to judge by appearances, could never have been washed since his birth, was breaking into loaves, from a huge mass of dough, great lumps which he was marking *with his skin*, while another reeking operative was thrusting them into a monstrous oven; the whole had a most *un*appetizing effect.

We passed several pretty villages, snugly perched in the clefts of the mountains, embowered in forests of peach and fruit-trees, all in perfect blossom. It is curious that in passing over this stage, on our way out, we saw no villages; but then, we had

not either time or spirits to look about us, for the cold. At eight hours of space we left the river-bed, crossing it by a bridge to a little village from whence we ascended the left-hand hills by a precipitous path, among earthy mountains sprinkled with pines and oak. Then through a mean but thick forest of fir-trees to a more open and very pretty country, well cultivated, with a number of pleasant villages, among groves of walnut, apple, and pear-trees, some of which were scattered about the fields and left in clumps, as if placed by the most correct taste. In one place there was a little blue mountain lake, bordered by pastures, among the sedges of which hundreds of wild ducks and their broods were sporting.

We passed through one village very romantically situated, between two streams at the bottom of a steep descent among fine forests, the name of which I forget; but I remarked in it a curious specimen of the science of hydraulics, in the carriage of water from a great distance, and over most irregular ground, in wooden pipes constructed of short pieces inserted one into the other. This must have been for the purpose of conveying some water of a peculiar nature, probably that of a fine spring, and perhaps for some particular purpose; for there was common water in abundance all around the place.

Our load-horse knocked up before we reached Iskee Soor, which we did in ten hours of time, and we started from thence at four o'clock in the afternoon, upon an eight hours' stage, to Niskar, over a cold, bleak, black, mountainous country, with

a wet soil and sprinkled with miserable fir-wood; it reminded me of the ugliest part of Upper Bavaria in winter. There was snow all around, and a little in our path; but mist and mud annoyed us more than the snow. We lost ourselves in the first, and had a sore fight with the second, as we descended the long extent of wooded mountain that led us to Niskar. It was a weary stage, occupying full nine hours of time, and tried the sure-footedness as well as bottom of our posters. Two of them seemed scarcely able to go when we set out, and one had a leg like a mill-post; yet, after the severest ascents and descents, we gallopped them, helter-skelter in the dark, over full seven miles of the vilest roads, among stones, and stumps, and copse-wood, without their ever coming down, or even making a false step. We reached Niskar at one in the morning, and were told there was such a flood in the river below, through the melting of the snow, that there was no passing it without a boat, and a boat was not to be had till daylight. Whether this was the fact, or a tale made up between the postmaster and the Tâtar, in order to get a few hours' sleep, I could not tell; but reminded him that his reward depended on his good behaviour, and that daylight must show the truth or falsity of his representation. "On my head be it," said he; and accordingly we made ourselves at home in a most comfortable apartment of the postmaster's, got a so-so supper, and went to sleep.

April 5.—It was broad daylight when I awoke and roused the snoring Tâtar. A vile breakfast

detained us another hour, so that it was seven ere we mounted. The delay allowed us to see the beauties of Niskar, which truly are very great —quantities of cultivation, orchards, and gardens; houses in terraces built in the Turkish fashion, in all sorts of wild strange nooks; and fine lofty mountains behind, frowning in coppice-wood below, and dark forest above. We had, as the Tâtar said, to cross the river in a boat; and then a rapid scamper across the fine, rich, but not half-cultivated plain, brought us to the lovely wild glen which you may remember my describing, the lower part of which was clothed in evergreens (phillyréa and alaternus, I believe) with box, rhododendron, &c. and the upper part with a fine forest of oak, beech, sycamore, ash, &c.

Fifteen miles of this glen and its pass brought us to a fine open cultivated country, along which we gallopped in style, down a gradual descent into the noble and beautiful valley of Tocât. This is the first stage that we have been able to give our horses fair scope; it is nine hours, or thirty-six miles, and we trotted the first fifteen, and gallopped the other twenty, breathing the cattle thrice, I think, for about five minutes each time; and performing the whole, including the delay of the ferry, in five hours and a half.

I wish I could describe Tocât to you: it is one of the places best worth seeing on the road, and much did I regret that I could not stay to examine and to sketch it. The town, which occupies a ravine in the mountains, is large and prosperous-look-

ing, and adorned with many mosques and minarets. The huge castellated rock that rises above it is both grand and picturesque. Many of the hills are covered to the top with vineyards and corn-fields, orchards and gardens; and the broad river that rolls past it, is crossed by a fine old bridge. On the whole, the ride from Niskar was delightful and exhilarating, and the whole country about Tocât charming. The town itself was cleaner than ordinary, and there was something about it and its environs that reminded me of Europe. The houses, with their Italian roofs; the well-paved streets and roads; hundreds of gardens around it, each with its kiosk, or pleasure-house, like the country-boxes of our citizens, all in the nicest order. Then the valley below it, broad and beautiful with its noble river—villages in every corner, like the environs of a metropolis in Europe. The mountain skirts are covered with gardens, and the plain a sheet of cultivated or cultivable land. Spring, too, was here greatly advanced; the cherry and pear trees, as well as the peach and apricot trees, were in full blossom, and there was an abundance of primroses, violets, grape-hyacinths, cyclamen, wood anemonies, and a thousand other little beauties, greeting us in the woods and on the wayside, as we scoured along. What a difference does season make!—where was all this beauty when I rode this same stage by the cold moonlight of a bitter freezing night, with the country white in snow? How I could have enjoyed it all at leisure, and with you, dear ——! but, alas! we are travelling Tâtar.

They gave us vile horses at this splendid place,

after waiting two hours; and our Tâtar had to give the head Suragee a sound drubbing before he would produce a beast that I could ride. I was glad to see him put upon his mettle, for I had considered him rather soft on more than one occasion. Miserable were the best we could extract, after all, from the postmaster and his myrmidons — galled — lame — legs swelled—the load-horse, the skeleton of a dwarf-pony. But never doubt the powers of a Turkish posthorse; and Gunje Aga has, I must say for him, the talent of managing his cattle well: he goes slowly for a while till they get their joints well suppled, and then pushes on rapidly. Bad as our beasts were, we did the stage of eight Turkish hours, down the splendid Tocât valley and thence up another, to Toorkhal, in six hours.

It was dark long before we entered Toorkhal, as remarkable for dirt and mud as Tocât was for neatness; and we remained there only an hour and a half. We now held our way up a subsidiary stream of the Tocât river; and, following one of its branches, crossed a high track of country. We had been joined by another Tâtar, and were all jogging on at a moderate trot when I fell asleep and lost my party in consequence of my horse's lagging behind, just at a fork of the stream, where two ways met. It was moonlight, and, on awaking, I saw the dilemma I had fallen into, and began to call out lustily to my party; but no answer was returned. I then thought of letting my horse take his own way, believing he would certainly follow his companions; but the brute was as stupid or as

sleepy-headed as his rider, and would show no indication of a disposition one way more than another—if anything, he was rather inclined to stand still. I was really at a loss: to take either way might be to increase my distance from my party and the road; so I stood still at the crossing of the roads, and took to hallooing again with might and main. Full half an hour had passed in this way, and I had become truly uneasy, when I heard, as I thought, my halloo repeated—it might be thieves, no uncommon folk in these parts, so I prepared my only pistol, and "loosened in its sheath my brand." But in a little while longer, my doubts were resolved, by the Tâtar riding up to me, and asking me what in Allah's name I was doing there.—I explained the matter to him, and then he entered into a long description of his despair when he missed me, and his resolution to search the whole country to find me. The truth was, that he and his companion had been so closely engaged in conversation that they never thought of looking behind them until sleep overtaking them also, Gunje Aga had awakened suddenly—looked for Tchelebee, and lo! he was not—upon which, of course, he had gallopped back to look for his charge. A hard break-neck gallop over most rough and difficult country, in which I never should have been able to find my way without a guide, broke the spell of drowsiness and soon brought us up to the rest of the party; and it was a lesson to me in future to avoid sleeping, so far as might be possible, in such untoward situations—I say, so far as possible; for to combat the leaden power of sleep at all times

is physically impossible — the fit will have its way, and you might as well tell a blind man to pick his steps, or a deaf one to listen attentively, as a thoroughly worn-out and drowsy man to abstain from sleep. Often have I put myself to all manner of tortures in the saddle to force myself to keep awake —sleep surprised me in the act or the conception of the means to rouse myself. I have got off my horse to walk, and have slept upon my feet while staggering along—no; it is better to yield for a while, and the fit, when a little indulged, will in time go off, or become fainter.

We had two rests for coffee this night, and much sharp galloping; and I think I never felt so much refreshed by a cup of tea as at one of these halts; it wakened me up, and made me feel as strong as if I had but that moment mounted: let all travellers use tea! In the morning, a long sharp ascent and a descent by the remarkable narrow pass I have formerly mentioned, led us to Amasia, just at six A.M.; completing the stage of twelve Turkish hours in eight and three-quarters.

A strange, wild, rocky, peculiar place Amasia!— Last time I saw it frowning in clouds, and rain, and snow—now, it was all smiling in spring; the narrow bed of its fine river one plot of blowing peach-trees—its rocks covered with blooming shrubs, and its sweet, green, little meadows, all so different from the wide-spread beauty and grandeur of Tocât; yet all so well worth lingering in, and sketching, and taking away. Alas! — As we clattered through the town, I observed the remains of what

I think must have been several churches converted into mosques, and one very handsome structure, with pillars of marble, as I think, nicely kept and surrounded, like a church at home, with a neat green, railed in. Fragments of buildings and stones, that had been parts of ancient structures, were numerous everywhere. But the vile posthouse and insolent Suragees, the worst, I think, of both upon the road, made me glad to quit the place with all convenient despatch, which I did after a most sorry breakfast.

A sharp clamber carried us out of this singular hollow; and a rapid gallop took us across the plain to Marsteewan—an eight hours' ride, in four of time. A delicious day, but soon becoming too hot. The plain as green as an emerald, covered with cultivation, or with flocks and herds, which keep down its luxuriant pastures—how we did scour over its smooth surface! Now began the frequent use, with a blessing on them, of the numerous little fountains built by the charitable, over every clear spring that gushes from the soil. How thankfully did we stop and drink, often without dismounting, from the wooden ladle left on the stone top, for the purpose! but these strange Suragees would not let the thirsty horses taste a drop, although it was obvious that the poor panting animals were dying to do as their riders did—no; on they must gallop to the end of the stage without moistening their lips. Many a struggle have I had with my poor horse, and not less so with my own heart, to maintain this barbarous inhibition, and sometimes both got the better of me; but all people have their own customs, even

in the management of their horses; but I am lingering on this stage longer than we were in riding it.

A long delay in getting horses, at this Marsteewan, which is a large dirty village, with more than the usual proportion of burying-grounds about it, detained us till half-past three; when scouring down the valley with the bad horses they gave us, we did the stage of twelve hours to Osmanjic, in nine, reaching that place at half-past twelve night. In this stage was my old friend Drekler Dagh, of fearful and dangerous memory. It was fine—very fine—a desperate chasm to be sure, with lofty, savage, strangely-contorted rocks, and I have no doubt, even in daylight, would prove to be one of the most striking pieces of that kind of scenery imaginable; but a bright night, and the absence of mist, and snow, and ice, had robbed it of part of its horrors—the danger and mystery were lessened, in fact, and the feelings were less excited. From hence, down the stream to Osmanjic, at as hard a pace as the frequent bad steps and fordings of the river would permit. The noble castellated rock—one of the finest of the kind I can remember—rose in the plain on the banks of the Kizzil-Irmak, (not the same river as at Kara Hissar,) conspicuous, even in a pitch-dark night, for clouds had overspread the sky, and rain began to fall soon after we cleared the Drekler pass. There are three of these rocks close to each other, called the "Three Black Brothers," of which, that which is fortified, and is surrounded by the town of Osmanjic, is the largest and most commanding.

At this place we were detained two hours, and took our way down the glen of the Kizzil-Irmak at half-past two in the morning of the 7th of April, as gusty and disagreeable as the preceding day had been pleasant. The Tâtar had presaged rain from the heat of the weather, in crossing the plain of Marsteewan, and it came now with a witness. So dark had the night become, that none of us could see two yards before us, even after our eyes had recovered the effect of the glare of the posthouse; and had not the Tâtar rode a white horse, I think I should have lost my party, over and over again, for not a foot of the road was perceptible: indeed, from the roughness of our course, there did not appear to be much of one at all; so I kept my eye fixed upon the white back of the Tâtar's horse, wrapped my Arab abba as well around me as the furious wind would permit, and contented myself with thinking that morning must come, and that rain does not last for ever.

In some parts our road was very alarming, and we heard the roar of the swoln river close under us, while forced to trust to the sagacity and sure-footedness of our horses alone. I cannot imagine how our villain of a Suragee managed to keep to the path at all; it was better, perhaps, that we did not see our danger. Morning had dawned before we passed my other old friend Soormas-e-Kiaya, or as my present Tâtar called it, Erma-Sheikh. This, as well as the pass of Drekler Dagh, was robbed of something of its terrors, by the absence of ice and snow. It is very fine, certainly — four or five

hundred feet perpendicular above the stream; the whole rock must be twelve hundred feet high. Perhaps, the number of mountain passes and precipices I have seen since crossing this one last year, detracted something from its majesty, by comparison. Both these passes are tolerably paved and parapeted, evincing an appearance of attention to the safety of travellers, which belongs, no doubt, to the better days of the empire.

We entered Hajee Humza, completing the stage of eight hours, wet and weary, at eight in the morning. After being detained here an hour and a half for horses, they brought us the most wretched animals with which we had yet been insulted, soothing my easy Tâtar with flattering words, which induced him to accept of them in spite of my remonstrances. But his own steed made a stumble on leaving the town, and our Suragee came out with some observation, which I did not hear; the combined effect of both, however, was to throw Gunje Aga into a passion. "Back, back!" said he to me, with an ominous flourish of his long whip; "you shall see what I will do with these *kuipe-oglan*; *anna senna, baba senna!*" So back we went to the post-house; where, alighting with a bound, but without a word, he seized the head Suragee by the collar, and dragged him away, whip in hand, the fellow pale with terror, and jabbering remonstrances or excuses all the way. Where he led the man, or what he did I know not; but the effect was a rapid production of capital beasts, brought by the head Suragee, now

quite humble and meek, and we made a second start with better prospects of speed.

I saw little of Hajee Humza; but its grim old castle, and nice gardens and orchards on the river side, seemed to promise something worth the traveller's lingering for; as for us, away we went in rain and wind, down the stream, which, however, we soon left, for a race up and down uninteresting *tuppehs* and hills, that brought us to Tosia. The stage is called nine hours—I do not believe it is thirty-six miles; for we performed it in little more than five hours, in spite of much and very slippery mud. We passed several fine villages and plains to the left, on a tributary of the Kizzil-Irmak, all smiling among their luxuriant and blossoming gardens: but what shall I say of Tosia, with its romantic town and lovely valley, its splendid cultivation, its green picturesque hills, and its multitude of waters? What a contrast to Persia! what a contrast to all the scenes of the last twelve months! We scarcely entered the town itself, but I was struck with the solid appearance of the buildings. The mosques, and many of the houses, constructed of stone, and rising one above another, in irregular groups and terraces, showed to much advantage, and looked very like a European town: and as a little before five in the afternoon we rode forth again upon our way, I could have believed myself travelling in some of the sweet orchard districts of dear England itself. All was laid out into little fields and paddocks, interspersed with orchards and gardens, divided by walls and hedges: the first built of mud and thatched, and

partly overgrown with herbage; the last, formed of barbary bushes and other thorns, with pollard elms and oaks, and willows, and here and there a glorious old tree, just as at home. The pretty lanes, too, and the banks, and the general keeping up, all bespoke a better state of things. The irregular ground and little sweet romantic ravines, so varied and so lovely, quite went to my heart. I could have thought I was actually riding through some part of Worcester or Herefordshire, or Kent — somewhere about Seven Oaks, or Cooper's Hill. So complete, indeed, was the illusion, aided by the little red-tiled houses, with their whitewashed walls, thickly scattered about, that for "some moments, ay, one treacherous hour," I could have lost remembrance of where I was, and believed myself transported to the better and happier land. But there were the Tâtar and Suragees with their picturesque but incongruous costumes, riding before my eyes, and ever and anon would pass a Turkish peasant in his wide Dutch-like breeches and short jacket, or a long be-robed and be-furred horseman, with his decided turban, would come stalking by, to break the harmony of the scene, and bring me back to Turkey. But, in truth, I talk "foolishness," for the poignant and increasing desire I feel to be "at home," would have strangled the illusion in its very birth; and I only mean by such terms, to express the strength of it. Ah, if all Turkey were like Tocât and Tosia! so prosperous-looking and happy! Are they so in reality?—there lies the question, and the rub, I fear. Are there not grinding Pashas and Mutsellims, and their myrmidons, to squeeze the

miserable Ryots? Yet the oppression must in some places be less severe, or they could not look so prosperous. Where in Persia do we see anything that bespeaks a degree of confidence and security like what *seems* to be felt in these beautiful districts. I wonder what my friends, the Persians, would say to this scene—whether "Irân-e-Azeez" would still be the greatest and finest country in the world in their eyes? But, indeed, I need scarcely wonder about it; for they, the French of Asia, conceive the glory of the "great nation" is never to be equalled, as it is never forgotten by its sons. Even if they should feel the truth, pride would prevent their admitting it. I do not make this allusion with any intention of sneering at the French, whose country and nation are really things to be proud of; nor would it be fair, perhaps, to make light of the Persians, for a prejudice which may be thought to smack of patriotism; but, alas! there is more of personal vanity and gasconade in every such expression that is heard from the mouth of a Persian, than of real honest love for his country.

Too soon did we quit this beautiful place, which, in a fine spring evening, would have been all that is delightful, with its cowslips, and its primroses, and hyacinths, and rich copsewood banks, and true English lanes; and which, even in the snow-storm that now came on, was fair and lovely to behold. We had a bitter cold stage of ten hours, or forty miles, to Kojah Hissar, which we performed in six hours and a half, in spite of the rain of last night and this day. I know little of the road, but

that it was wearisome and uninteresting in spite of the rate we went at.

We reached Kojah Hissar about half past eleven, where I laid myself down for an hour in the hopes of mounting again at the end of that time; but on waking, I was informed that it was the night of the *Bairam*, and the Suragees were accordingly absent without leave, so that no guide was to be had; and after the usual amount of objurgation and abuse, I just lay down where I was, in a most miserable coffee-house, nor did I awake till daylight of April 8th, chilled through and through with my wet clothes of yesterday, which I had slept in.

We were delayed till eight o'clock with the pretended devotions of these rascals. Now had all this proceeded from any truly religious motive, no one could have blamed it, however *mal-apropos* for travellers in a hurry; but to find these knaves sheltering themselves from a bad night's ride under pretext of devotion, was rather too bad. Although it was infinitely provoking to have important matters delayed by such mean and villanous instruments, there was nothing for it but to muster up my philosophy and bear it as I might. In fact, the night did turn out desperate cold, with snow showers, and a high frosty wind; all the water in the vessels was frozen into lumps, so that we should have had a sad time of it. The country here is altogether bleaker, and less inviting than that we so lately passed.

The next stage to Kara-jurân, a nice village in a bare uninteresting country, is called eight hours,

but we galloppeq it in a little less than four. It led us across a range of bare rocky hills, with no small quantity of mud. At half past twelve, on again for a short stage of three hours to Karajillan. This is usually gallopped in one, but from mud and melted snow it cost us forty minutes more: we came in at half past two exactly, and now for an hour's rest. Oh! none can imagine without trying it as I have done, "how dear to me the hour!"—that little hour which brings its welcome, though transient, relief, when the cramped and chafed limbs can be stretched out for a while, and the head ceases to whirl with the objects that flit eternally by. These Turkish villages, too, how I have learned to appreciate them! and hail the sight of our munzil from the distance. This one of Karajillan had a small turreted minaret, that looked for all the world like a village spire! Alas! soon does the illusion vanish as we view the filth and dirt which fills them.

On, at half past three, to Humamloo, a stage of nine Turkish hours, along the same bleak plain in which the last village is situated, and passing Chirkesh, a fine but muddy town, where we had in vain sought for admittance on our former journey, in a snow-storm at night. It was snowing again now, and the ground here was covered with it, and it was bitter cold; but we gallopped on, and did the stage in six hours, reaching Humamloo by half past nine. Took tea at Humamloo, and on again by eleven, up two great hills deep in snow, where we lost our way. Another night of these killing cold frosty winds that seemed to chill the very

heart and freeze the blood, and cut a body through; yet, thanks be to God, we bore it, gallopped when we could, and entered Gheriza a little after five, where we found every creature asleep. Heaven grant that this may be the last of these killing nights! for the strength of man cannot stand many of them.

April 9.—We had ridden yesterday near one hundred and twenty miles in twenty-one hours, and in killing roads and weather; no wonder Tâtar and all were done up, and that we slept two hours instead of one. We were on horseback about half past seven, and held down a pretty oak-clad glen, and then dashed like madcaps along a small marshy plain, next down a very pretty valley, with the sweetest possible intermixture of wood and cultivation to a Rahdâr, or police post, about half way, where we took coffee. Here there was a delicious fountain, over which was built a pretty temple-like structure, adorned with two Greek pillars, each of which bore, very plainly, engraved inscriptions, but I had not time to read them. A word of remonstrance to my Tâtar, this morning, had transformed him into a very devil of activity, and he did nothing but whip on the load and the Suragees' horses, leaving me to follow as I might. Away we went from this station, dashing along narrow paths, among stumps of oak and deep ruts, and passing another of these picturesque fountains, also adorned with pillars, besides many other fragments in various places.

All this time it was bitter cold; my old enemy,

the frosty wind, was again at work; and long icicles were hanging to the horses' ears and nostrils, as well as to our mustachios, all the way from Gheriza. It certainly was not "Spring with *dewy*," but with "*icy* fingers cold," and I began to wonder whether she would ever again think of giving us a breath of "the sweet south." Millions of white, and purple, and yellow crocuses, which giving the season credit for a proper state of forwardness had popped out their sweet little heads, and had paid for their rashness with their lives.

A gradual descent which we made short work of by a gallop, brought us down upon the noble plain of Boli, where the climate improved a little with the day; and I should have enjoyed the ride through it, but the fury of Gunje Aga was here at its height, and the hoop, and the hollow, and the whip never ceased; it was one succession of hard bursts with scarcely a moment's interval between, till we clattered into the pretty town of Boli, finishing the twelve hour stage in six and a half.

If Tosia was lovely, Boli and its plain were magnificent. It was one sheet of cultivation, interspersed with villages, and the rising grounds with which it was sprinkled, and the great mountains with which it was surrounded, were covered, the latter up to the roots of the forests, with fields, inclosures, coppice, gardens, and orchards, villages, or houses. It was like England on a large scale, all but the lofty and snow-topped mountains so deeply clothed with pine forests, and all so green, so very verdant, it did the eyes and the heart good

to look at it. It was really a splendid specimen of Asia Minor; something one never expected to see; for who could have imagined that the cold bleak snow-covered waste, we had suffered so much in passing over in the preceding winter, was the same rich, verdant, smiling valley that was delighting our eyes in its present garb of spring. The cultivation, too, was good, though some of it, I must say, was carried on in an unusual manner; for, in several places, I saw the seed sown broad cast on the unwrought land, which was then ploughed down to cover it. I saw the same rude process practised among the cultivating Arabs in Mesopotamia, and successfully, I believe, by both.

All this ground, I suspect, would be interesting to the antiquary; for not only did I observe Greek columns and tablets at the two fountains already mentioned, but every burying-ground, of which there were multitudes, was full of cylindrical stones, which appeared to be fragments of pillars belonging to ancient edifices.

We entered Boli, which was gay with the crimson and glitter of the rich Turkish costumes, at two in the afternoon, and left it exactly at three, to pass my old friend the Boli mountain, the last high ground intervening between us and Constantinople. The first part of the stage led through a beautifully varied country of field, and coppice, and village, and little hamlet, till ascending the well-remembered mountain, we again plunged into snow and mud, and forest; indeed I never remember

seeing the admixture of the two former more exquisitely perfect. But it was all one to us wild riders; away we went, gallop, gallop, gallop;

Tramp, tramp, across the land we ride,
Splash, splash, across the sea,
Hurrah! we Tâtars ride apace!
Dost fear to ride with me?

Stopped for a cup of coffee at our old guard-house, on the top of the mountain; then down-hill as fast as legs could carry us, pulled up at the foot to tighten girths, and then galloped the remaining twenty miles to Ducheh, through bush and brier, through mud and stream, over bank, and through river, scarcely drawing bit. We did the whole stage of ten hours, or forty miles, exactly in six hours of time, arriving at Ducheh at nine o'clock, in full vigour, and hoping for quick despatch. But we were doomed to be disappointed, as every one will be who travels Tâtar in these parts. We were told that we must wait till the horses were fed and shod, so I went to sleep for two hours; and on awaking about midnight and rousing the Tâtar, received for answer to my remonstrances an assurance that no horses could be got till morning, and that if they could, the roads were so deep in mud, that it would be madness attempting to move until daylight. There were times when such a reprieve would have been welcome to my weary limbs and stiff joints; but from some cause or another it happened that I was remarkably fresh at this time, and particularly anxious to push on. Impatience, indeed, generally increases as we ap-

proach the goal, and I could enjoy no rest until my eyes had been gladdened by a sight of the domes and minarets of Stambol. Thus I took the present delay particularly ill, and could not help expressing my disappointment in very decided tones to my friend Gunje Aga. There was no help for it in the mean time, however, and so I laid myself down once more and went to sleep.

April 10.—I have omitted to mention that, a few stages back, we had overtaken a *cavasse* or confidential servant of the Grand Vizier, who had favoured us with his company onwards; a companionship which I would readily have dispensed with, as it increased the demands of our party upon every posthouse, and probably was the cause of some detention. Awaking at daylight this morning, I found this gentleman bustling about, for the common good, I do believe, but without my Tâtar, who, to my anger as well as surprise, I discovered still sleeping soundly. I soon roused him, and he, too, began to bestir himself, but in a manner which convinced me there was something wrong, and at length he flew into a violent passion, and began to belabour the Suragèe with his whip. It turned out that this worthy functionary had brought out for our use a set of miserable jaded cats, that had only come in the evening before from Khunduc, the villanous stage of forty-eight hours, which we were just about to commence. But what the better were we of blustering? there were no others, so at half past seven we mounted. The first part lies along the same plain and is beautifully cul-

tivated; multitudes of magnificent walnut-trees, with peaches, apricots, cherries, and other fruit-trees, in full blossom; hedges of the "stake and rice" sort, like those in England, and such a perfect carpet of verdure! What a country this might be under a good and firm government! The latter part of the stage lay among rising grounds of deep earth, covered with forest of oak, and beach, and hornbeam, with underwood of rhododendron and thorns, and such gushes of primroses and violets! As to mud, it was bad enough certainly. In the forest we followed no path in particular, but each took the best he could find; had it been a day or two earlier, that is, immediately after the snow and rain, I do believe we should have stabled our horses in it; as it was, plunging and sprawling through when we got into the bog, and galloping or trotting when there was a hard bit of road, we contrived to get cleverly over the twelve hours in six and a half, arriving at Khunduc at two P.M.

We were off again in an hour, and on better beasts than our last jades; and got well over the first eight miles, after which the whole country became a marsh covered with water, and the speed of our progress was checked. I never saw such a march as this. It was one continued plunging through thick mud covered with water, till we came to the wooden bridge of Oozun Kupri. This, though rather dangerous, was passable enough; but when we had gone a few hundred yards along the causeway, with which it communicates, the Suragee turned sharp off, plunged into the water alongside

it, belly deep, with the horses, and took right across the fields through a perfect sea, that covered them far and wide. We continued this strange sort of work for an hour, often plunging so deep that we were up to the knees as we sat upon our horses, particularly in passing from one field to another, till at length, wearied with the fatiguing and endless work, I demanded " why we had quitted the causeway. " O! châmoor chouk," was the reply, " quantities of mud." " And what do you call this!" roared I, in somewhat of a rage, " is not this châmoor chouk?" The fellow grinned and shook his head, but on he went, until at length the water diminished, and after a great deal more wading in thick mud alone, we reached and crossed the river Sangarius by a wooden bridge which I well remember on our former journey. On the other side of this bridge the ground became more firm, and we had some hard galloping until we reached the shore of the Sabanja lake. We gallopped along its sands, sometimes wading for a mile at a time in the water, and then emerging on its bank, till about ten at night we reached Sabanja, having done the ten hours in seven, spite of mud and water.

A fair supper, which we much needed, detained us for two hours and a half, when, getting capital horses, we cantered along, though often plagued with mud, to Ismîd (Nicomedia), six hours, which we reached at five in the morning of

April 11.—At this place we became aware of a change that had been effected by the orders of the

Sultan in the mode of posting. It appeared that a grand new road had been constructed from Sartari to Ismîd, a distance of eighteen hours, or about seventy-two miles; and that little carts drawn by four horses each, were provided for transporting travellers upon this grand highway. Accordingly, so soon as we had aroused these sleepy-headed *maîtres de post*, two of these machines were produced, and precious concerns they were. Little larger than a good wheelbarrow, they were on four wheels, but without springs of any sort; so that you may fancy the sort of motion they had upon the torrent-bed-like pavement of the towns, and the scarcely better surface of the road. In some there was a seat where you might sit as much at your ease as you could; in others you had to place your baggage so as to serve for a support to the seat of honour. Each cart holds but one person with a very moderate share of baggage; so the two were fully necessary, one for the Tâtar and one for me. These precious vehicles are called *postas*, and are used in Bessarabia, Wallachia, and other of the north-western states of the empire, and much resemble the little Kibitkas you may see on the roads in southern Russia. No less than four horses are attached to each of these minute concerns, in a very simple manner, and they are driven by one postilion, who sits upon the near wheeler, and flourishes his whip after a most business-like fashion. Considering the disproportion of the thing drawn in bulk as well as weight to the power applied to draw it, the slight nature of the harness, and the manner in which, by consequence, it stots and bounds

along the irregular surface of the pavement or road, the whole concern very forcibly reminds one of a cat with a skillet, or a dog with a cannister tied to its tail, and driven along a rough-paved street by the hooting of wicked boys. I must, however, say that the horses and drivers were capital of their sorts. There stood the little beasts, scarcely thirteen hands high, as round as apples, arching their little necks and pawing the ground with as much pride as a war-horse, and up got the smart-jacketed drivers with their business-like whips, and gathered the ribands with an air of knowing experience that in some degree quieted the natural apprehension which you felt at being thus abandoned, like a pea upon a drum-head, to the mercy of four wild horses.

Just as we were mounting our cars, an embargo was laid upon our equipage until we should have satisfied the custom-house demands, and I thought we should have had a row about the affair; for the official, who brought the order and authoritatively commanded us to halt, was very much disposed to be impertinent when I complained of his taking such a moment to make his demand, after we had been more than an hour in Ismîd. In fact, I remonstrated against the whole proceeding as being an insult to a British gentleman, charged with despatches, and some warm words were passing, when up came a very respectable-looking Turk, who, on hearing the affair, delivered me out of the hand of the Philistine, and told me "Bismillah!"—go on. Now the fact is, that, though I believe it is a new thing to search the baggage of English or European travellers at the

entering custom-houses of Turkey, it is a right which the Turkish government do assuredly possess, and may exercise without just offence being taken — for does not every European state do the same? — no courier, whatever be his rank or title, is exempt from this disagreeable ceremony in England, in France, or Austria, or Russia — a Turk would be equally subjected to it in these countries, and on what plea can the subjects of these countries plead a right of exemption in Turkey. The truth is, that in former times it never was inforced, from a sort of respect to the English; and their Tâtars and others, perhaps, have brought the thing upon themselves, by becoming carriers of dutiable articles, such as pearls, precious stones, shawls, and even cash—thus defrauding the farmers of the Government customs, who have every right to levy their dues on all. But we English have too often a wrong-headed way of acting in these matters. I know not whether it be from national bluntness, or feelings of independence, or a contempt of "the natives," and "the black fellows," imbibed, perhaps, from our position with regard to the population of the East and West Indies; or whether this contempt (which, as I fear, it does) spread to all other lands and nations beyond our own—certain it is that we do conduct ourselves often in a manner not only very little calculated to increase the affection or regard of foreigners towards us (whatever it may their fears); but, on the other hand, to give the impression of a brutality and overbearance which I should be very sorry to think was really characteristic of the nation; and I do wish that every British subject who

travels abroad could be impressed with the feeling that upon him and his conduct may depend much of the national honour and character in the eyes of strangers, and that not only the fate of future travellers, but the interests of this country may be compromised by a folly or an indiscretion committed by himself. But I forget that we are seated in our post-chaises, and that Stambol is still more than seventy miles off. Crack goes the whip—"Igh, igh, igh, hu—ooah!" howls coachman, and away go the little steeds, spurning the ground and very nearly carrying away the corner of a house at the first turn; but the postilion has them well in hand—they keep the middle of the zigzag streets; it is only the living freight that feels it, and the two or three first jerks very nearly unshipped us both before we could lay hold of the rails of our vehicles. There is a little stream crosses the street—surely he will stop, and go soberly over the gutter! Deuce a bit!—he redoubles his speed, whips his too willing horses, and goes at it like a battering-ram. Hugh! what a shock!—has the poor fellow no bowels?—mine seem turned upside down—but the rogue only casts back a glance at the wheels, (to see if all four are still on, I suppose,) a triumphant look at me, as much as to say, "isn't that cleverly done?" a fierce, knowing nod of the head, a flourish with the whip hand, the finger pointed quaintly upwards, while the whip hangs from the wrist—and away, away, up the hill! I had piled all my felts and cloaks upon the sitting-board, with a down saddle cushion, an old travelling friend, above all; but the whole were thrown into confusion before we had

gone a hundred yards. When we had cleared the town and "got off the stones," and the cart had righted a bit, I managed to get myself jammed into an attitude to resist, as much as possible, the reiterated shocks, drew a long breath and looked about me; and certainly the scenery and country in which we were thus tearing along were well worth gazing on; the blue gulf, with its green shores and distant mountains and white sails sparkling on its surface, was a delightful novelty to one who longed for a sight of the ocean; and the rapid advance of spring gave everything a double charm; but, alas! there was no enjoying it—another jolt that dashed my jaws together made me hold on for dear life with both hands; my teeth rattled in my head, my poor loose bones in their sockets: and how the carts did not go to pieces I cannot tell: it was not the mercy of the drivers that spared either them or us. Whenever there was a deep rut, a large stone, or a heap of gravel, at it they went, with a "yah ullah!" always looking back for applause when they had succeeded in tossing you a yard high. Ah! how often did I wish myself on the back of a quiet poster again!—the stiffest gallop or the roughest trot was down and feathers to the "postas." About ten or fifteen miles on, up came the Tâtar along-side—the two drivers were running a race. I turned to look at him, and as our eyes met he gave me such a look of dismay, despair, and agony! Never had his four quarters been upon four wheels before, and that look seemed to embody a vow that never should they be so disposed of again.

Well, on we drove, up hill and down dale; the new road seems to have been made with a noble contempt for the science of engineering, going right over every height in its way; as for its surface, it was little better than that of the soft earth freed from its covering of turf; and the metal, where metal had been placed, was far from being of a sort that Macadam would have approved of, or such as in any degree afforded ease to the pain of our sore bones. We changed horses three times, and once at a sort of new *hotel*, built by the Sultan as a post-house, where the officials in the European surtouts and swords of the new Nizâm, and the regular office, like the booking-place of a coach-office, gave such a Europeanized air to the whole, that I did really feel myself to be approaching that well-beloved continent. Its shores were now in sight across the head of the sea of Marmora, and soon did we see the spires of the august city rising in the distance. We swept past the dark forest of cypresses and tombs at Scutari, while the setting sun was gleaming through their melancholy boughs; but ere his disk had disappeared beneath the waves, we had stopped, weary, sore, and splashed from head to foot, at the door of the last posthouse. A most unwelcome delay in procuring porters and a caique; and, oh, how welcome was the moment when I found myself once more afloat upon that beautiful and narrow strait which separates the Asiatic from the European world! It was past seven o'clock when I set foot ashore at the Topkhaneh, and a few minutes more saw me welcomed by my kind friend the

consul general at Pera, and installed in all the comforts of his hospitable abode. Much was there to hear and to ask, and many were the topics that fell under discussion, so that in spite of weary bones it was late before I retired to the first regular bed I had lain in since quitting Tâbreez. When you recollect what I had done within the last month, you will scarcely be induced to deny my title to a good night's rest; for not to speak of sufferings by cold and wet and wind and frost, in a ride of eight hundred miles from Tehrân to Erzeroom, I had ridden the whole way from the latter place to Constantinople,—that is, a distance of 1,100 miles,—in eleven days, two of which I was detained against my will, on pretence of want of horses, or for other causes, thus riding at the rate of rather more than a hundred and twenty miles in the twenty-four hours, and, with the exception of these stoppages, seldom halting night or day for more than three hours at a time. I know that it has been done even quicker by European gentlemen as well as Tâtars, and it was not my fault on this occasion that it was not performed in seven days; but mud and water and want of horses are things that cannot be contended with. I have seven hundred and fifty miles yet before me, and I heartily pray that this may be my last Tâtar trip, and so good night for the present.

LETTER XVII.

Anxieties of a Traveller.—Interesting Rencounters.—Therapia.—Magnificent Plane-tree.—The Bosphorus.—Constantinople.—Mosques.—Cisterns.—Seraskier's Tower.—Madhouse.—The Hippodrome.—The Serai.—Aqueducts.—The Et-Maidaun.—Dancing Dervishes.—March of Improvement.—Gradual Changes affecting even the Ladies.—Turkey and Poland.—Speculations.

Constantinople.

I VENTURE one letter more, dear ——, from this interesting place, where business has detained me longer than I at first expected, and even yet I cannot tell to a day when I may be despatched.

On the day after my arrival, I found my left eye, which had been much inflamed by sun and wind, (having lost the screen I used with my Persian cap,) so painful that I did not venture out. But the certainty of utter and instant blindness could scarcely have withheld me from examining the packets of letters from home which had awaited my arrival in the hands of my friend the consul. What a time had elapsed since the dates of my last!—how much might have happened in the interval! Ah! this is a part of the traveller's cares and pains of which little care is taken by those who profit

by his labours or are amused by his adventures. Even his own nearest and dearest friends, who are filled with anxiety for him, think little of the weight and irksomeness of that "lengthening chain," which he, the object of their solicitude, drags along with him; of the painful doubts and presentiments that oppress him when his thoughts take a homeward flight; of the dark images of misfortune and bereavement that beset his soul in hours of exhaustion and gloom, and put thorns under his sleepless head as he lays it on the ground, or the cold floor of the lonely caravanserai after his toilsome day!

Much cause have I, in particular, had to thank the Almighty in all sincerity of gratitude and humility for support and protection, in a journey teeming with greater sufferings, mental and bodily, than you can comprehend; and still more for the preservation of those whose life and welfare were more to me than my own, and who, had they not been waiting to welcome my return, there could to me have been neither welcome nor reward, nor further object; and if there have been some painful events, some "gems" dropped from the social or the family circlet, let us bless and kiss the hand that has sent the trial but spared us deeper sorrows.

Among many letters of domestic interest,—those from yourself, dear ——, included, and which I shall not think of answering at present,—there was one from our friend B. H. which gave me the greater pleasure, as it was totally unexpected. A two years' absence from home sets us sadly back

in the history of our acquaintance,—who would have thought that at Constantinople I should hear from B——, from Styria, and have the prospect, "Inchallah!" of meeting him at Vienna! Next day I had another pleasant surprise. After breakfast, as I was preparing to go to Therapia, who should walk in but my old and much-valued friend W. D——, who has been for some years travelling in Europe and Asia. Alas! there is, as we advance in life, a shrewd taste of bitter mingled in all these little cups of enjoyment; some fifteen years had passed since we parted in the distant land, in lusty manhood, and with unbroken spirits, if not just in the flush of youth; and though I had seen him more than once after his return, my memory wandered back on this occasion to the days of our first acquaintance, and I felt an unpleasant choking about the throat as I contrasted the present with the past, for he was sadly changed; yet not more so, as it seemed, than I was; for he bent upon me eyes of almost fearful inquiry as he declared that he never would have known me. And it was true; I was changed — incessant hard work, want of sleep, and the withering effects of snow and sun and frosty wind had so emaciated and blackened me, that I do believe

> "The very mother that me bore
> Would not have known her son!"

So, well might D— have been puzzled.—Much had we to talk of—much to tell of peril and adventure past—of changes and chances among our friends—

of losses and disappointments, and a little too of pleasant incidents that had occurred to each respectively. But who that has travelled long through this vale of pilgrimage, knows not that as we advance on our journey, our sorrows increase and our joys diminish both in frequency and intensity; and in truth, as says that poet who, of all others, perhaps, has painted our sorrows and our joys in the most vivid colours,

"And smiles that might as well be tears."

Yet who is there that would refuse the pleasant draught because of the bitter drop that mingles with it? or would give up the delight of meeting with a valued friend in a foreign land, because the joy of their intercourse will surely be dashed with melancholy tidings?

This was a blowing, stormy day: dark clouds came rolling from the Black Sea, and mist was hanging on the high banks of the Bosphorus. It was no day for a boat; indeed, none could have made way against the gale and current, even if it could have lived in the sea that was rolling down the narrow strait—so all I had for it was to mount a horse again—and well buffetted did I get ere I completed the fifteen miles to Therapia. It put me in mind of some of my late work; but it was not interminable like that, and a kind welcome and a comfortable room at the British palace soon set all to rights again. Well! after all, the delights and decencies of civilized society are something, and do not come amiss after such roughing as I have had;

and, assuredly, I know not where these are more fully to be enjoyed than in the polished elegance of Lord Ponsonby's domestic circle, and the comforts of his Excellency's hospitable home.

Business detained me a most willing guest for several days at Therapia, and I cannot tell you what a delight it was to feel once more at rest even for a season, without the constant moral struggle of mustering up resolution to face the cold blast that even now continued to pour down mist and rain from the grim jaws of the Black Sea. Yet we had one or two bright blinks during my stay at this beautiful place, and in one of these I accompanied his Excellency and Lady Ponsonby up the shores of the strait, till we looked into the wide-expanding Euxine;—very dark and frowning he was, and well worthy of his name;—so, having taken a look, in passing, at the celebrated castles and batteries which guard this end of the Bosphorus, (very crazy concerns they seemed, both in point of general repair and the artillery they were armed with,) we turned towards the beautiful village of Buyook-Dereh; and having coasted along its pleasant shores, landed to look at a group of most magnificent plane trees which are to be seen in a pretty meadow near it. There are five or six stems in this group at present, but it is said they are all parts of one original tree, the centre of which has been destroyed by fire or decay, leaving these separate fragments of the huge old trunk, like a father bequeathing his property in shares to his children, and, in fact, the circular form of the stems do suggest something

like a confirmation of this tradition; though, if the old trunk filled up the whole space which these partially encircle, what a tree it must have been!

Beautiful as the Bosphorus always is, I shall never forget its loveliness on the morning after this bad weather, when, after an early breakfast, I stepped into a caique and rowed down from Therapia to Pera: certainly there is nothing so splendid and captivating in its way as this natural canal. The gale had broken, the sky was unblemished azure, and the air like the breath of May. You felt yourself inhaling gulps of health and spirits at every breath. The mountains and hillocks were overspread with an emerald sheen—even the trees and bushes were assuming their vernal livery, and contrasted most happily with the multitude of picturesque buildings that bordered the shores like a thick fringe of pearls, and clustered on every height, or swarmed in every retiring creek and bay. Hundreds, nay, thousands of vessels of every sort and size, from the ship of 100 guns, to the light Greek skiff, studded the shores and coves; and their sails loosed to dry, or sheeted home and hoisted to the influence of a scarcely perceptible western breeze that was carrying them towards the Black Sea, fretted the whole scene, land and water, with brilliant white spots that mingled happily with the dark cypress groves and the red house-tops. The old Genoese castles frowned in still more picturesque grandeur, closing over the strait, in which their huge forms were reflected as the caique glided down, till it opened the reach from which the multitudinous and glittering edifices of the

august city, and its extensive suburbs, bursts upon the eye.

Assuredly, I never saw a spot which unites with so many beauties, such evidences of a teeming population—so much of the bustle of human life in the multitude of animate and inanimate objects around you, as this view of Stambol. London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, are shrouded and blackened by smoke —their beauties, whatever they may be, are concealed by a sable veil; Calcutta, Madras, and all Indian cities, are enveloped in a green one, and seldom afford a panoramic picture. Bombay, with its splendid harbour and its fair dwellings, its palm trees and blue mountains, is the only place I have seen that resembles this scenery.—But where can you see such clusters of various and picturesque buildings, such an harmonious union of gardens and orchards, of pleasure-houses and palaces, such tiers and fleets of gallant vessels, such multitudes of boats and barks of all sorts, dancing upon the blue and glittering sea, and all under so brilliant a sky that looks smiling down on everything beneath—ah! there is nothing like Constantinople! No wonder that the Northern Autocrat should cast the eyes of desire upon it; and, if it were merely from a longing after its beauties, I, for one, would be apt to hold him excused.

I did not neglect the opportunities I enjoyed during the few days of my stay at Pera, of seeing a little more of the wonders of this great capital, and, accompanied by D—— and another friend, and conducted by our old pilot Mustapha, we took more than one

ramble through its streets and bazaars. The principal objects that attracted my attention were the mosques, assuredly the finest in the world. Of these, the largest is that of Suleimania, and a splendid structure it is. I cannot pretend to describe it; but the interior building is a square, under a lofty and highly ornamented dome. A gallery running round, is divided from this by a range of arches, on most magnificent granite columns, of thirty-six feet high, I should think, each being of one solid stone. There is a large square without the mosque, surrounded inside by an arcade upon pillars of the same substance, and of marble, all of which were taken, I believe, from various Christian churches, by the monarch by whose command this mosque was built. And there are various projections, recesses, and outworks clustered about the body of the structure, all in the same style of ornament, and composed of materials so solid as to give a high notion of the power and magnificence of its founder. I like, too, the external form of these edifices, so different from the long extension, but narrow breadth, of most of the Indian and Persian mosques. It is a clustering of domes over domes, of columns and minarets, all grouped about the great rising cupola, which form a great, consistent, and imposing whole—the one in question is a noble work.

We visited several other mosques, all less than this, though much resembling it in plan of construction, and all teeming with objects of interest—splendid columns of marble, or Egyptian granite, or serpentine. Massive and highly ornamented gateways and porches, and handsome courts and cisterns

for ablution. To describe all these minutely would tire without instructing you; but I do wish it were in my power to show you drawings of the finest, that you might form an idea of what such things are. Perhaps, what struck me most, after the intrinsic grandeur of the buildings, was the excellent state of repair in which everything was kept, and which savoured more of Europe than of Asia. Coming directly from Persia, where the most solid material used is brick and mortar, and where everything from the hovel to the palace, from the bazaar to the mosque, is in a state of decay, this attention to the condition of the public buildings was the more remarkable by contrast.

Perhaps, the most remarkable structures after the mosques are the ancient cisterns of Constantinople, several of which we peeped into. They are huge covered excavations, the roofs of which are supported on numerous marble columns, constructed in the days of old, to supply the city with water; and a prodigious stock of it they must have contained. Some of them are empty, but others have still a great quantity of this necessary of life: and a singular and impressive thing it is to descend to the brink of the water and look through the maze of columns, till the eye is lost in the dark and seemingly interminable labyrinth. One of these reservoirs is called, that of the Thousand Columns. We were told that the number was actually three hundred, but this we were forced to take upon credit, as it would have needed a boat and a stout heart to explore the secrets of this vast prison-house—a noble place it

was for murder and mischief; and, I dare say, fatal to many a dog and cat.

The next place we went to was the top of the Seraskier's tower; a lofty structure, on the summit of which a guard remains constantly stationed, to watch for the first appearance of fires. From this elevated station the view, as you may suppose, was splendid. The whole of Constantinople, with Pera, Galata, Scutari, the harbour with its shipping, several reaches of the Bosphorous, the sea of Marmora, the Gulf of Nicomedia, and all the distant mountains of the Asiatic side, far as the eye could reach, lay like a map stretched out beneath us. The extent of the city was smaller than I had supposed; but it was studded thick with noble mosques, and you saw every spot and object, so well known to story and to history. There were the Roman aqueducts—there, the Seven Towers. There was the *At-maidaun*, or Hippodrome; and here, the *Et-maidaun*, the bloody spot which so lately witnessed the murder of ten thousand janissaries. These, and St. Sofia, and the Seraglio, with the Bab-e-Hoomayoon, the August gate, the Sublime Porte itself, and many another interesting object, were all under the eye. I could have stayed there the whole day; but we had much to see, and a walk through the bazaars had too much attraction to be abandoned, even for the sake of the view from the Seraskier's tower. But what can I say of these more than I have already said? their interest is inexhaustible, but it is like that of a walk from Charing-cross to Leadenhall-street; it speaks to the eye, not to the ear; it must be seen, it

cannot be described; it is a chapter in the history of human nature, that is ever varying and ever new; but you must read it for yourself.

In the course of our ramble we visited a sad and humiliating scene. It was a madhouse. A number of poor creatures lay chained by the neck, with a heavy chain and collar, in their separate cells, miserably ill-found in raiment, and for the most part upon the bare earth or pavement of their prison. The place was a square, against the sides of which were the cells, and there were a number of persons there looking at the poor confined lunatics; many of them making game of them and behaving in a most unfeeling way. It was a condition well calculated to drive a man distracted, if he were not so already. The poor creatures were of all moods, from the sullen to the fierce, and from sad to gay: one looking like a demon, and gnashing his teeth like a wild beast; another immovably fixed in abstraction; a third singing ridiculous songs to any who would listen to him; some were eager to tell their stories, and some there were who could converse in rational terms with those who approached their window. It was altogether a revolting as well as a painful sight, and one turned away sick at the sight of so much irremediable misery; verily, a reform in their madhouses is one of those that is cryingly called for in Turkey.

Our next point of interest was the *At-Maidaun*, or Hippodrome, where, in days of yore, horse races, and exercises with the jereed, the bow, and the sword, were commonly exhibited. We were much

interested by the fine Egyptian obelisk, brought from thence by Constantine, and set up in this place. Its shaft is a splendid stone of fine granite, with hieroglyphics on all its sides; but the sculpture on the fine marble pedestal, though still to be traced, as well as the inscriptions beneath, is greatly defaced. There are also in this Madaun the remains of an ancient stone-built column, said to have been once covered with brass, and to have supported some brass figures. Perhaps, however, one of the most curious and interesting relics of all is the twisted serpent-formed shaft of bronze, which supported the trident of the Delphic oracle. The mosque in this At-Maidaun, built, I think, by Sultaun Mahmood, is a fine square structure, in the same style with the rest, and having a court surrounded by marble columns; but we did not enter the interior.

At the bottom of the pedestal of the obelisk, while we were there, sat an insane person, not in the garb of a Dervish, but well dressed, in a red cloak and Fez, who was bellowing out a continual chant of something like prayers, which he enunciated with infinite effort, but in so inarticulate a manner, that I suspect he had had his tongue cut out. There was a crowd around him, and he was evidently regarded as something holy; for the women came and kissed his hand, and brought their children to be kissed by him, which he willingly consented to; but when any one came and stood in front of him, or the crowd closed too much before, he waved them impatiently away. I could not learn who he was; but apprehend that such scenes are very common oc-

currences, not only here, but at all the shrines and mosques of Constantinople.

From hence we went to the Serai, through the Bab-e-Hoomayoon, or exalted gate—the gate which gives to this court the appellation of "Sublime Porte," as that from whence issue the decrees that "rule the destinies of the world;" and where the heads of the rebellious and disobedient are suspended to wither in the sun and rain—there were none there now. We continued through a court, which with its white-washed buildings, offices, paved area, and streets, looked quite like that of a European fortress, to the second gate of the Serai, through which we were not permitted to pass without an attendant: but six piastres, about fifteen pence, soon procured us one, and we saw the royal kitchen—a beastly place enough, but there was a savory-smelling dinner, on a large scale, just being carried out of it; and the hall where the foreign ambassadors are received, and served with dinner—"let the infidels be fed!"—a curious and richly ornamented place, built of marble, but disfigured with paint—how inferior to the simple beauty of the unique Dewanee Khâs at Dehlee! We stopped before the last gate of the Serai, which gives entrance into the body of the palace, and through which, of course, no one can go without a firmaun. It was handsome and simple in form, constructed of marble, with a far-projecting canopy-like roof, very richly adorned with gilding and painting, though a little out of repair. These far-projecting roofs are much in use here; they are very handsome, and

two or three fountains so constructed, are remarkably beautiful. The same style of architecture is found in India, in the buildings of the time of Akber, Shah Jehan, and Aurunzebe; but which borrowed from the other, I am not prepared to say; I suspect Constantinople affords the original pattern.

The Sultaun does not now dwell in this ancient imperial residence. He resides in his other palaces on the Bosphorus, which are numerous, and this venerable dwelling is consequently neglected.

We next visited the house and offices of the Grand Vizier, which are built of wood, are like a huge pile of European houses without any plan of architecture, but with multitudes of windows. The Dewan Khaneh, or public hall of audience, is a long, large, lofty room, somewhat resembling a country ball-room, with a recess on the side opposite the door, where the great man sits ensconced, and which is not unlike an orchestra.

We examined in a very cursory way the remains of those mighty aqueducts which, constructed by the Roman emperors in the days of the glory of the lower empire, conveyed water from the distant springs that still supply the city. They are now ruined and broken, but stand monuments of the splendour and munificence of their founders. But that which interested us not less as having reference to recent events was, the ruined and deserted Et-Maidaun, or Meat Market, the site of the barracks of the Janissaries, which attracted our notice from the Seraskier's tower, and where, as I have already mentioned, ten thousand men were destroyed un-

relentingly by cannon and by fire. Its ruined, fire-scathed mosques and buildings bear gloomy testimony to this fearful execution; for not only were cannon brought to play from every avenue upon the assembled wretches, but all the surrounding buildings were set on fire to hem them in and prevent their escape; so all perished, either by fire or by shot. Seventy thousand men are said to have fallen victims to this dreadful measure of policy; dreadful, even if rendered necessary, by the turbulent insubordination and arrogance of the body. But this amount, by some, is said to be exaggerated, and the number is limited to forty thousand. The massacre was not confined to Constantinople, the unhappy men of the proscribed class were hunted like wild beasts through the provinces. The waters of the Bosphorus, the harbour, and the Sea of Marmora, were covered for weeks with the mutilated and strangled corses of those men who were once regarded as the bulwark of Islam—the strength and support of the Ottoman empire.

On our way home one day, we looked in upon another scene of interest, but of a different kind; it was the Mausoleum of the imperial family, where many a son and brother of the royal stock lay reposing under marble gravestones covered with rich Cashmere shawls, and with jewelled turbans of cloth of gold above their lowly heads: it was an impressive scene after the stirring ones we had been viewing, but all too gay and painted up for the solemn purpose to which the place was dedicated.

There was one other *sight* which we went to see,

and about which, at the hazard of wearying you, I will say a few words. It was that of the celebrated dancing Dervishes. These singular saints perform on set days and in public. Their place of performance was a neat, little, octagonal mosque, like a theatre or rather circus, painted white and green and neatly ornamented, floored with wood and leaving a space of ten feet deep, railed off all round for the spectators who filled it completely: there was a latticed space behind for the women who choose to see this solemn piece of foolery. The dervishes, dressed in long gowns thrown over their short jackets, and in long very full petticoats, having on their heads tall, conical, grey felt caps, like sugar-loaves, entered one by one, and seated themselves round the octagon, first bowing profoundly to their superior or *Peer*, where they remained apparently abstracted, casting their unconscious looks in all directions as if they were void of all speculation. After a rather weary interval passed in this silent contemplation, one by one they started up with a bound, and walked solemnly round the room, chaunting verses from the Koraun, and bowing profoundly, while turning round to the seat of their superior. The singing was exceedingly fine—it was superb recitative. After this had been continued for some time, one after another arose; and, taking off and carefully folding his cloak, commenced the dance in his jacket and petticoats, by a series of solemn gyrations, in the course of which, as in the waltz, each individual, while turning on his own centre, revolved also round the room. By degrees,

some fifteen or twenty were thus in movement, their ample petticoats floating round to a great extent, like those of ladies who make *cheeses* of their lower garments to please children, their arms raised in various attitudes, and their eyes closed. It was a strange thing to look upon their slow and solemn movements; for in this commencing dance, their gyrations were slow, their figures motionless, except the feet, their countenances fixed and grave, like statues moved by mechanism. The power of maintaining the same attitude, and balancing themselves in their continued pirouette, was certainly very remarkable, and the whole proceeding had in it a mixture of solemnity and buffoonery, that could not fail of impressing the imagination. I am afraid that absurdity was predominant. I was informed that there are usually three dances performed, each in its turn increasing in the rapidity of its movements, till the motion becomes a perfect whirl. That of which I saw a part, was the first and slowest; but I could not stay out the rest of the performance. All was conducted with the most perfect order and regularity, but certainly rather resembled a raree show than a religious service. These Dervishes belong to a college, or *Medressa*, as it is called, which is well endowed. The elder Dervishes live in great comfort, and the *Mooreeds*, or disciples, who do not fare ill in the mean time, look forwards, after due probation, to the advantages enjoyed by their masters. Absurd and contemptible as all this appears to us, it is not more so in reality than much of the conventual mummery of the Romish church,

or the extravagances of certain sects in our own country; the Jumpers, for instance, not to speak of others, who cast a ridicule upon true religion, by what to all sober-minded people appears the wild irreverence of their modes of worship.

Among the most amusing things I observed on our rambles, as a sign of the times, was more than one regular *shoe blacking* establishment, where sons of the brush sat ready to give the newest polish to the shoes of the faithful, the right earnest black calf-leather shoes which are fast superseding the red and yellow *papooshes* of the old régime. In fact, the costume of Turkey is rapidly undergoing a thorough change; even since I was here, much has been done towards Europeanizing the appearance of the place and people. Instead of the furred *kuirks* and flowing *benishes* of former days, and the gorgeous harness, the pistols and yatagan and cimeter, and the gold and silver and crimson that glittered on the persons of the Osmanlees, and swelled out their figures to majestic dimensions, you see the slim figures of the new Nizam flitting past you in their semi-European garb, which hangs loosely on their small persons; and their officers walking or riding about with waists tightly girt with the belt of the modern sabre, the only weapon that hangs from their side. The simple, and in my opinion, very unbecoming red Fez, has usurped the various and magnificent turbans that used to glitter in the Bazaar like a tulip garden in a breeze of wind. I am told that his Highness has ordered the rich liveries of all the Cavasses of state, that

shone in scarlet and gold, to be changed for a sober plain brown suit; and that all great men, particularly those in office, feel bound to follow the example, which here has the force of a command. The only class of officials that appear to keep to their old costume is that of the Tâtars, whom one sees still with their long petticoats and handsome kiurks; but even they have exchanged the old tall "yellow cap" for the red fez, round which they wind a handkerchief or two of bright colours. The merchants too, who keep to their shops and bazaars, retain much of their old dress: but a change is threatened there; for his Highness has got so partial to everything European, that the shops are every day feeling this influence, assuming more the appearance of those in Europe; many of them having glazed windows, with the wares sold within displayed at them, and the Greek or Armenian owners, clad "à la Frank," behind a counter or at the doors. It is said he intends to give orders that this style of shop shall be universally adopted, and that the merchants shall all assume the European dress.

The Sultan, in fact, as I heard, takes no small delight in making a progress through the streets, and often comes and sits in some particular shop, having previously sent intimation to the owner. Among those so favoured is our old friend Mahmood or Mehemet, the perfumer and seller of elegant knick-knacks, whom we visited also on this occasion, drank his sherbet, smoked his pipes, and paid in the purchase of some pretty trifles, which

he puffed with as insinuating a tone as any English shopman for the life of him could do.

Even the Turkish women, I do think, are permitted to participate somewhat in the changes of the times, so far as dress is concerned, at least. Even since I was last here, it appears to me that the portion of their faces, displayed from under their corpse-like head-gear, is enlarged; for they not only show the eyes, and consequently the nose, but often the mouth too, concealing only the chin with all its dimples: but in truth, as I think I observed before, if we are to judge of the piece by the sample, I, for my part, would rather take some of the pretty Greek girls one sees running about in Pera or Galata, than any piece of Turkish beauty that presents itself, or is permitted to see the day. *On dit*, that the Sultan, the great father of change, is about to operate a change in these matters also; for while I was there, the rumour was current that he had issued an ordinance for all the ladies of the Seraglio to wear stays, and the European costume in general! Alas! for the Dûdûs, and Leilahs, and Fatimahs, and others, particularly those *en bon point!* how they will be *gené* with all this! I think I see them, the moment the visiting officer or dame is gone, hurrying to their bowers, and doffing their uneasy robes and tight-lacings! But what are we not to expect from an Oriental monarch, who, by one stroke of the pen or word of the august lips, puts an end to the use of tobacco!—forbids Turks to smoke!!!

All these are little puffs and flaws of the great

reforming breeze, which is about to rattle over the Turkish empire. Heaven grant that it may be but to clear the political atmosphere, and give it health and elasticity, and not to wreck the body politic itself! But the petty matters of which I have now taken notice, are mere trifles to the serious impending dangers which have been mustering and thickening over her devoted head, every now and then sending forth a warning flash that betrays the fierceness of the coming storm—a storm which, if permitted to burst, will not destroy Turkey alone, but will shake all Europe. Heaven grant that those who have the power to avert it, may have the eyes of their judgment opened to their duty! and that Turkey, unlike poor, prostrate, mangled Poland, may find "a generous friend," if not "a pitying foe;" and "strength in her arms," if not, "mercy in her woe."

Assuredly the little I have seen of this country, and its obvious great capabilities, suggest ideas of strength and importance, that cannot fail to place it, in the mind of the beholder, at once in the rank of great nations in spite of its present fallen condition; and cold and heartless indeed must he be who would not wish to assist in the regeneration of such a nation. Coming, as I did, from the misery and barrenness of Persia, the evidences of refinement and cultivation, far beyond that of most other Mahomedan states, were particularly striking; and as to the comparative merits of their capitals, Constantinople is as far above Ispahan, or any of the other cities of Persia, as they are above the reed

huts of an Arab tribe. Yet, do not mistake me, fallen, degraded as Persia may be, she is still a noble subject to work upon; and among the benefits which Great Britain prides herself on dispensing to the world, it is to be hoped she will not shrink from extending the hand of protection to a nation with which she is connected by strong political ties, while, at the same time, she fulfils the great moral duty of promoting the happiness of a large portion of mankind, and of emplanting the seeds of good order and national prosperity, and ultimately, with God's blessing, of true religion in a spot from whence they may be dispensed to all our brethren of Asia, who now sit in disquietude, and danger, and darkness.

But it is time to close these speculations, and rid you of Stambol and its magnificence, of which, I fear, I may have given you enough, and more than enough, *ad nausea musque*, — so let us to the road again, for I am impatient to be at home. This day all has been concluded, I am to accompany a cabinet courier, Mr. C——, who is now here; our horses are bespoken, our despatches are to be here to-morrow, and then, *Inchallah!* I set foot in stirrup again for the last time this trip—it is a pretty step indeed, only seven hundred and fifty miles! but give us good weather, and there is no fear of us. My next will probably be from Semlin, till when adieu!

LETTER XVIII.

Start from Constantinople.—Sillivria.—Rain and Mud.—Chorli.—Bourgos.—Eskee Baba.—Apsa.—Adrianople.—Heavy Rain.—Ibepcheh.—Hermanlee.—Bulgarian Haymakers.—Simple Bivouac.—Eskew.—Philipopoli.—Hard Gallopping.—Irresistible Drowsiness.—Ihtumân.—Sopia.—Hard Riding.—Bulgarian Costume.—Khalkhallee.—Expense of Posters.—Ak-Palanka.—A Tumble.—The last Balcan.—Robbers.—Tower of Skulls.—Nissa.—Frontiers of Servia.—Nightingales.—Active Suragee.—Delay at Jagodina.—Trick prevented.—Tedious Ride.—Light-hearted Traveller.—Servian Fare and Music.—Caution to Travellers.—Adieu to Turkish Posting.—Rest.

Quarantine, Semlin, 7th May, 1836.

HERE am I, dear ——, in limbo, as you see; but congratulate me, for never man was better contented to be so. I am now on the right side of the Danube. Done with Asia, and, above all, with the discomforts of Tâtar journeys; I am in a Christian land, and within reach of many of the comforts, if not the luxuries of life: verily I believe that few have often quitted the walls of their prison with better will than I and my companion entered these I now date from.

I told you, in my last, that it was arranged that Mr. C——, cabinet courier, and I should proceed together to this place, where we were to await the

arrival of further despatches, which should be sent off to us from Constantinople, so as to reach us by the time our quarantine should have expired, so as to delay neither us nor the public business.

Accordingly, on the 22nd of April, I took my last dinner with my good friend, the Consul-general, whose kindness I shall not easily forget; and we had just finished our bottle, when Mr. C—— and the packets arrived. So shaking hands with my kind host, and girding on my harness once more, we were soon in a boat crossing the noble basin of the harbour of Constantinople. We passed many a gallant ship, saw others repairing or on the stocks, looked up one or two of the thousand exquisite little ravines which run inland from the harbour and sides of the Bosphorus, filled with beautiful gardens and nest-like dwellings, and landed precisely at the same wooden pier at which I had arrived, some sixteen months before, on my way out.

Here our horses were in waiting. Our baggage was landed and arranged upon the load-horses—we dismissed old Mustapha, who had come to see us fairly off, and remained to pursue our own devices. I was far better off than on my first scamper: my companion, an experienced traveller, was particularly well acquainted with this road, having made the journey from Semlin to Constantinople no less than eight times; and the practised activity with which he exerted himself to get all right for a first start, proved, that while he had profited by experience, he had lost nothing of his energy.

By eight o'clock in the evening we were mount-

ed, and plunged into the dark deserted streets of that portion of the Fanar through which the road leads to the gate. In crossing the little sloping green beyond, where I remember having been embarrassed by one of my wearied horses falling with its load, we turned more than once to take a farewell look of the proud capital of Turkey, and mark the picturesque effect of its numerous lights, which studded the rising ground on which it stands like a firmament of stars. But all was lost sight of in a few minutes more, when we plunged into the deep shade of the great burying-ground which we had to pass, the tall and tufted cypresses of which enveloped us in pitchy darkness.

The road here was very indifferent, often leading us over the ancient and broken causeway, till we reached the great barrack, the first built by Sultaun Mahmood, in his rage for European improvement. From hence the path winds over a succession of heights and hollows like the steppes of Hungary, dipping down to the sea-side at the two points of Ponte Picolo and Ponte Grandé, each of which is the *débouché* of a stream, which has been dammed up into an inland lake by the wash of the waves, and forces its way by several mouths. At both of these there are villages, where we took coffee; but notwithstanding these refreshments, I know not a more dreary night-stage than that from Constantinople to Sillivria. It is called twelve Turkish hours; and though we rode it in nine, as we trotted much of the way very fast, I am persuaded that it is fifty long miles; we had the variety of a heavy shower

of rain as we approached the stage, which soaked us and the roads too, so that they became so greasy that the horses could scarcely keep their feet.

At six in the morning of the 23. we were again in the saddle, for Chorli, ten miles distant, across a waving plain of light loam, or deep black soil, soaked by the same shower that had wet us, and which seemed to have fallen by bucketfuls here; — our horses were execrable too; but it was day-light, and we could see about us; and if we fell, we should fall soft, so we drove the poor beasts on so fast that we did the ten hours in five, reaching Chorli by eleven o'clock, and leaving only one of them done up on the way. In spite of the execrable roads this was a cheerful pleasant stage, the whole country was green and fresh, and finely undulated — quantities of cultivation or fine pasture every 'where around us, with here and there a town or village on a distant height; and several single farm-houses in the valleys or on the shoulder of a hill, gave a pleasant feeling of security to the scene—the only want was that of wood; there was not a tree to be seen.

We left Chorli a few minutes after twelve with better horses, and struck right across a long, weary, endless tract of downs waving into hills, and by a road deep in mud to Bourgos, ten hours. We spared neither whip nor spur, and entered that prettily situated village with its white domes and minarets, rising from a valley adorned with gardens and orchards, in five hours and a half. This was good work considering our ways and means — splashing work I am sure it was; so to improve it, we called

for horses and dinner in the same breath. The best part of the latter consisted of a capital cold fowl put up for us by my good friend the Consul, and we did not take long to discuss it.

In forty minutes we were again upon the backs of very good horses, which we turned to good account, dashing over, or rather splashing through a wretched road of four long hours, in three of time, to Eskee Baba, or Baba Eskeesee, reaching it by nine in the evening; and having thus completed our first one hundred and forty-five miles in twenty-five hours, we thought ourselves entitled to a few hours repose. But in Tâtar travelling, as you may have perceived from what I have already said, we have neither "boots" nor chambermaids to wake us with a "Coach at the door, sir;" so that when once asleep we can never be sure of when we may awaken or be awakened again. The Tâtar, you would swear, seems never to think about it; in fact, unless he is bound to perform the journey within a certain time, it is obviously none of his interest to rouse either you or himself to face the disagreeables of the road, so it was well that after a dish of tea and bit of bread, we were on our horses at half-past four of May 24. taking the way to Apsa, the next stage, six hours distant. Our way lay over the same sort of green wavy country; but it was more sandy, so that we trotted bravely on, and reached the post in three hours and a half. Among the many lovely flowers and blossoms that we trampled under foot in our rapid course, I observed one of great beauty; it was something like a peach-blos-

somed calmia, of exquisite hue; but whether of that class, or a rhododendron, I could not stop to determine.

The next stage of the same distance, which brought us to Adrianople, we discussed still more summarily, galloping every foot of it in two hours and a half. This was a most beautiful stage. I think the first view of Adrianople from a gap in a certain height about six or seven miles distant, is about as beautiful a *coup d'œil* as can be imagined. The valley covered with cultivation and foliage is traversed in its long extent by the noble river Meerich, the various reaches of which gleamed like so many little lakes among the wood; and the town rises on the gentle slope of a hill, with all its shining minarets and domes, from among a vast extent of orchards, vineyards, and gardens.

Like all other Turkish towns, you approach it through forests of tombs; but they are not here shrouded in their customary grove of cypresses. There is a mosque here which I am told is worth seeing, and which, from the distant view we had of it, I believe to be so. But we had no time for sights; so galloping along the causeway in a whole ocean of mud, scarcely waiting to pick up our head Suragee, who got a desperate somerset in the midst of it, we paid a flying visit to the Consul's lady, to give her good news of her lord, snatched a hasty repast (some very tolerable *blanche mange* and cream, by the by nicely coloured, and sold in the streets), and mounted fresh horses again at a quarter before twelve.

In leaving this place, however, our good fortune failed us. As we rode along the noble valley of the Meerich, the clouds which had been gathering above, began to pour down their contents, and not only drenched us, but rendered the roads so deep and muddy, that our wretched horses could scarcely make way along them. Nevertheless, we did the nine hours to Ibepcheh in a little less than six, and then held a council of war as to the expediency of proceeding. The rain was a serious obstacle in a dark moonless night, and on a road by no means either clear or free from danger. But as the first part of the road lies across a plain, and as a few hours would have just made the difference of reaching Philipopoli next evening, or not—a great step towards getting onwards, we resolved on pushing forwards, at least to Hermanlee.

Calling, therefore, for horses, we set our faces to the blast; and, galloping on, neck or nothing, we actually got into Hermanlee by a little after eight. Farther than this we did not dare to venture in so stormy a night, as the road from hence crosses a mountain intricate with ravines and broken ground, fording twice or thrice a river, the state of which we could not know, and winding along its banks so close as to be quite inundated in time of flood. Thus the Suragees held the road to be so dangerous that they would not undertake to guide us in rain and darkness, and we accordingly consented to remain here till two hours before daylight. By this arrangement we should have six hours' sleep ourselves, and our horses as many of rest; so that

we had every reason to hope they would finish the stage rapidly in the morning.

All this sounded well; but alas for the weakness of human nature!—and Tâtar and Suragee nature in particular—we had even feed the Cahwajee of the coffee-room to call us in proper time, but it was all in vain; he, too, failed in shaking off the bonds of sleep, and the first thing that awoke us was the light of day, shining through one of the broken oil-paper windows of the coffee-room. Up we started, but it was not till a little before five that we were on our horses. The rain had ceased; the dawn was fast chasing away the last stars from a cloudless sky, and the fine dome of the ruined khan of Hermanlee and its tower and minarets rising from the pretty valley, were glowing in the yellow light as we ascended the coppice-covered hill behind it —the first of the numerous Balcans in this part of Turkey.

We found that the road, though pretty enough in the daytime, would, in truth, have been an awkward one at night; and the river, though not so much swollen as the heavy rain led us to apprehend, would have given us quite enough to do in the night, particularly with the little nags on which we were mounted. We were now in Bulgaria, and found villages more numerous, and population, as it seemed, more dense; but many of the habitations seemed to be of a temporary nature, being formed only of "wattle and dab," and thatched with grass; the village, however, though its individual dwellings

are frequently renewed, continues, I believe, in the same site and is occupied by the same families.

During several of the preceding stages we had met with numbers of Bulgarian peasants in their little black caps, and sheepskin or coarse felt jackets, proceeding, generally escorted by a Turk or two on horseback, towards Constantinople. Some of them were mounted on "shaggy nags" of ponies, with a pound of hair at every heel, and harness wonderfully resembling the primitive garniture you have seen in our own highland hills; but the most were on foot. I understood that they were a sort of conscripts, pressed to go and take care of the Sultaun's horses while at grass, cut the hay, and perform other duties connected with the management of the Imperial stud. Each man carried a scythe, with the blade strapped to the handle; and I could not help thinking what a formidable band these might prove, if met with hostile intentions; but nothing of hostility had they, poor devils! in their heads; on the contrary, all with them was good humour and boisterous mirth. Each party had some oddly-dressed fellows among them, who acted the buffoon, and a bagpipe player, who, whenever he saw us, set up his pipes and played a national air; on which the buffoon came forward with mopping, and mowing, and antique gestures; and, dancing and throwing on the ground his dirty cap, demanded, or begged, with a rather importunate air, some small donation. It reminded me of our highland bands of shearers, going southward for work, or returning from it, who

do just the same. A little matter—some few paras, satisfied them; but the parties were so numerous that, had we given to all, our purses would soon have been emptied.

We also saw numerous flocks of sheep here, both black and white. Many of them were already shorn, but in so slovenly a way that it would have moved the spleen of any highland sheep-farmer. Thousands of lambs were skipping among them, and we had shepherds in abundance, playing very sweetly on their reed pipes. We also met whole caravans of four-wheeled waggons, drawn by bullocks, many of which, even in the rain of yesterday, were turning in among the coppice by the road-side to their bivouac for the night. The drivers and owners just turned the stern of the waggon to the wind, the bullocks stood or lay down under its lee, and the people, having made a fire and cooked what they might have to eat, just turned in, "all standing," and kept each other warm as they might. Simple covering enough!

The distance from Hermanlee to Eskew is six hours; we trotted it in three and a half, but at the expense of leaving two of our horses on the road a few miles from the stage, and "one shall never rise again." It is sorry work, after all, riding these poor wretched hacks to death; but there is no helping it; on we must get. Eskew looked beautiful in the morning sun, with its bright white minarets and buildings glittering among its gardens. We left it a little before nine, with a sun which shone fiercely enough upon us as we tore away down its splendid

valley, covered with cultivation and sprinkled with fruit trees, many of which were sheets of blossom; indeed, the pear-trees all along were numerous, and often perfect pyramids of snowy flowers. We passed several fine villages, and the road being level, though often very heavy, we trotted or gallopped a good deal, till, on the banks of the Meerich, within two hours of Philipopoli, we were arrested by a heavy thunder-storm that had been for some time gathering. In spite of this, however, we reached the town, twelve hours from Eskew, in ten hours of time, that is, a little before seven in the evening, our horses quite done up, but having carried us bravely through the mud and water.

Philipopoli, as I think I have told you before, is a considerable town, very picturesquely situated at the foot of a rock, which is also crowned with buildings and castellated; but I cannot say much for its cleanness. It was here that a large army of Albanians, Servians, and Bulgarians was assembled at the latter end of the war with Russia, ready to have pounced upon the weakened troops of that power who were moving on Adrianople, when their politics did what their arms might have failed of doing, in obtaining the terms of the treaty of Adrianople. Here, too, are many interesting traces of antiquity to be seen, in causeways, old walls, and facings of masonwork, to defend the city and banks from the river's encroachments; but we only saw them at the gallop, as we entered and left the place. At eight o'clock in the evening, after a good Turkish dinner, into which, by the by, not a particle of animal food en-

tered, we rattled across the old bridge which spans the river Meerich, and scoured away a six hours' stage to Tâtar Bazarchick in three and a half, in a night nearly as dark as pitch. I must confess that however good the roads may be, this "hey-go-mad" galloping in the dark is far from pleasant; for, although the horses we ride are amazingly sure-footed — more so, indeed, upon the whole, than any cast of horse I know, it is impossible that they can always be on their guard against the roughness and holes that must often occur in an unmade track; and, assuredly, a fall when going at such a rate would, in all human probability, tend to an abrupt termination of your journey. How they did it I can hardly tell; but, between sliding, and slipping, and stumbling, and recovering themselves, and good hard hearty galloping, *ventre à terre*, we did the job with whole necks.

It cost us an hour, that is, till half-past twelve at night, to get mounted at Tâtar Bazarchick, and at that hour we started on a twelve hours' stage to Ihtumân. So rapid had been our pace from Philipopili, that to sleep on horseback as we rode along would have been impossible; but being forced to save our horses during the first part of this long forty-eight mile stage to Ihtumân, we all got in tolerably drowsy, in spite of the sleep we got at Hermanlee. In fact, such rest is seldom refreshing in proportion to the time of its duration; for the mind gets provokingly active, sometimes even to an utter defiance of sleep; and even when the body does slumber, the busy spirit will be running a tilt in

all directions, as in our case last night, when I am sure both my companion and myself were as hard at work whipping and spurring, and heying on our weary jades, as if we had still been bestriding them. Be it also remembered, that we had ridden near a hundred miles since quitting our hard pallets at Hermanlee. Thus, as we slowly wound up the long gradual ascent beyond Tâtar Bazarchick, both of us, as well as the Tâtar, did nod most determinedly in our saddles. I do not remember ever being more overcome with sleep. I have slept upon my feet as I staggered along the path, having dismounted to keep myself awake by walking; but on this occasion I am sure I should have fallen down asleep without an effort, had I attempted to do so. In fact, when we stopped for a moment at Yanikew, a village some twenty miles on, I fell fast asleep as I threw myself down upon a bench at the door of the coffee-house. My companion, determined bravely to resist the overwhelming influence, would not lie down at all, but leant against a post, where, in a moment, he was as sound as I was. We tried to speak to one another, but you would have died of laughing to hear the inarticulate sounds that issued from our throats — it was so ludicrous that we both laughed, and fell asleep again with the laugh in our mouths. The Suragees called out for us to re-mount, and I never shall forget the misery of moving the leaden weight of my limbs from the bench on which I lay, to the horse. Both my companion and myself agreed that no price could compensate for such torture of exertion.

Not even the song of the numerous nightingales that chanted all night from every bush, had power to dispel this deadly drowsiness, which lasted till daybreak; indeed, till a good while after it, when, a little before six, we found ourselves near the top of the first ascent, in a dell wooded with oak coppice, with a fine retrospective look at the plain we had quitted, and a grand view of the snow-clad ridges to the right and left of us. At this point there is the remains of a Roman arch, which, perhaps, formed part of a gateway to some works for the defence of the pass, and here we refreshed ourselves with a cup of coffee, made by the hands of some guards established at the pass. It was just twenty-four hours since we quitted Hermanlee, and we had completed one hundred and forty-five miles within that time; pretty fair going, I hope you will admit.

It was a glorious morning as we dipped from our halting-place, crossed a hollow, and then ascended a gorge in the Ihtumân Balcan, from whence we dropped like birds down into the beautiful little plain of that name. The town, which, like most other Turkish towns, glitters with its white buildings and minarets from afar, stands in the midst of it. The skirts of the hills that bounded this valley were as lovely as anything in England with variety of surface, coppice and wood, field and inclosure, orchards, gardens, and little villages, in nooks of sweet retirement. The plain itself was cultivated like a garden. Along it we swept like a whirlwind, galloping up to the very posthouse door with a fury

that gave emphasis to the rapidly delivered order to "bring out fresh horses!"

In less than an hour we had swallowed our simple breakfast, and were sweeping along the remainder of the same lovely plain towards Sofia, another forty-eight mile stage. A gradual ascent, and a rapid trot over an unequal tract of rising ground, sprinkled with coppice of oak and blackthorn, all bursting into bloom, brought us to a point from whence we overlooked the magnificent plain of Sofia, rising at its further end into another Balcan; but we had a long, long, weary work of whipping and spurring, ere we reached the town, which lay like a dusky line far off, near the distant mountains.

The plain below us was a sheet of verdant fields, studded with villages, gardens, and fruit-trees; what a contrast to the cold bleak desert! I remembered it on passing here before: and how beautifully opposed to the snow-capped hills by which it was now bounded! I had had too much of snow of late to admire it, even at a distance. Yet I observed many pleasantly situated villages in far retired valleys, just below its line. Away we cantered and gallopped, and trotted, and halted, and then cantered again, attending to little but our horses and ourselves, so that we rattled off the twelve hours in six and a half, entering Sofia by a quarter past two.

Sofia, as I believe I have told you before, is one of those towns which, sparkling with minarets and domes, and white buildings, dotted with many windows, looks well at a distance, but which, when you

approach, the illusion vanishes, leaving meanness and dirt behind. Like most of the Turkish towns and villages, it is paved with stone; without this, the streets in rainy weather would be impassable; but such a pavement! so rough, so imperfect! and the mud that is produced is suffered to accumulate to such augean excess! It was pleasant, however, to observe the altered style of dress, particularly among the women, many of whom being Christians, wore no veil like the Turks, but went about the streets with their faces uncovered, as in Europe; indeed, I might have taken notice of this change before, had we not been getting on at such a rate; but galloping on as we do, making remarks is like shooting flying—you will sometimes miss.

These women wear a profusion of coins strung about their hands and necks; a gay-coloured jacket, and a belt with large brass or silver clasps round the waist. Many were very pretty; but their beauty was quite different from that of Orientals: blue eyes and rather small, light or brown hair, and small features, the countenance somewhat large and flattish, and altogether resembling the German style of face. They have fine, tall, erect figures, and walk well; but by all accounts, this uprightness of form does not extend to their minds, for I heard but a very poor account of their propriety of conduct. The men are not less portly and handsome in form; and their gallant Greek dress, gay jacket and vest, white kilt and embroidered greaves, with their little red cap set knowingly on one side of the head, from under which the hair falls in thick curls, set off their well-built figures

to great advantage. The Turkish men, who are much smaller in person and plainer in dress, with their women, who flit about in their indigo-coloured shrouds, like the ghosts of departed Blues, make but a poor figure beside the stout Bulgarians.

As I observed, we must shoot flying — for one hour and we are off—off on a sixty-four mile stage, with a storm brewing right a-head, which caught us before we had ridden an hour of space, and not only moistened *us* thoroughly, but our road, so that our progress became slow and difficult. Rain upon a journey is a sad discomfiting thing. It not only drenches yourself and puts an end to comfort, destroying the horses' footing so that they cannot get on, but it soaks all the loads and cloaks and accoutrements, so that they become heavy and unmanageable—real *impedimenta*.

We had now been nearly forty hours in the saddle, with only the relief of changing horses: we had before us six hours, or twenty-four miles, from Sofia to a village, Khalkhallee, and it became a question whether it might not be wise to halt for a few hours there, and feed our horses, which already felt the effects of the deep mud, and refresh both them and ourselves before completing the remainder of this long stage, or to push on and cross the mountain by a bad road and in the darkness of a starless night. That we took the prudent part, and resolved to halt, was certainly less from any serious feeling of fatigue than from a belief that we should on the whole rather expedite than retard our journey by so doing; for I declare that I was in many

respects fresher than I had been at earlier parts of the trip, and far less worn out than I felt in the morning between Tâtar Bazarchick and Ihtuman. But there was one consideration that reconciled me to a few hours' rest, even if we should lose them entirely as regarded progress: my eyes, which had been frequently troublesome of late, had become so much inflamed within the last two days, that I was forced to keep them shut, often for hours together, letting the horse pick his way as he could, and when I tried to open them the lids were so glued together that I could not. On leaving Sofia they were particularly painful, so that a few hours sleep would be no ungrateful thing, and accordingly we resolved to take it. But on reaching Khalkhallee before dark, and mistrusting both our own powers as well as those of the Tâtar to awaken us in fitting time, should we go to sleep so early in the night, we forced ourselves to proceed onwards some three hours, or twelve miles further, to a coffee-house at the top of the ascent.

The road was execrable. The rain had fallen heavily here, so that it was one continued splash; and it was so pitch dark, that we had to trust rather to the sagacity of the horses than our guides' knowledge, to find the path. The remains of an old causeway which crosses the mountain afforded us sometimes a little assistance, but oftener, by failing us all at once, betrayed us into deep mud-holes and pools of water. After all, it was but little after nine o'clock when we reached the coffee-house, and so little were we fatigued that it

became once more a question whether we should or should not go on. Some ominous stumbles of our steeds came to the aid of whatever leaven of indolence might be working at the bottom of our secret souls, and we resolved to come-to for some hours, after having been forty hours on horseback and ridden two hundred and fifty miles.

After a slight supper and a good dish of tea, we turned in, all standing as usual, intending to be on foot by one or two in the morning at farthest. But ours was a leaden slumber when once it fell upon us, and my companion and myself were the first to rouse the party at four on the morning of the 27th of April. It was five before the loads were tied on and we were mounted, and we pushed our horses sharply down a pretty wooded pass, which debouches on a lovely little plain with a river running through it, and several detached farm-houses and coffee-houses scattered over it. The heathy hills, the upland crofts, and pasture dotted with furze-like shrubs — the sweet strath-like valley, with its fresh verdure and scattered wood, and the fine full stream rushing along from rapid to pool, reminded me forcibly and touchingly of our own highlands. I think I could point out many a spot like it—Killin—Urquhart—Strathglass —all floated across my memory and mingled their cherished recollections with the landscape around me.

It led to a still wider and greener plain on a lower level, as the highland glen glides into the lowland strath, and at the further end glittered

among gardens the white buildings of the town, or large and pretty village of Sakew. Towards this, after clearing the gorge, we pricked on with vigorous intent; but after a sharp gallop of several miles were brought up by the giving in of no less than *three* of our horses. Taking forward, therefore, the remaining baggage-horse and one Suragee, we left the other with the Tâtar to bring up the disabled beasts, while we gallopped on to order fresh cattle. We completed the seven hours, or twenty-eight miles from the coffee-house we slept at, in three and a half hours; but, as appeared, at the expense of one horse, which, poor brute, gave up the ghost where he fell, and nearly killing two more which made their way into Sakew an hour and a half after we had entered it. The fact, as I believe, was, that although we paid handsomely for the corn *said* to have been given on the previous night to our steeds, they never got a grain of it nor any care, and consequently were not in a condition to bear our rapid progress in the morning following; but the Sultaun's horses are all fair game to these devils of Tâtars.

At half-past eleven on we went again along a green, rich, well-cultivated plain, at the end of which we ascended a wooded spur of the Balcan, and dipped down upon the still more lovely valley of Ak-Palanka, with its river winding through a variety of fields and enclosures, and its little tower and fort-like caravanserai lying just under our feet. The descent was rapid and stony; and as we trotted down with more speed than wisdom, down came the

Tâtar, horse and all, upon as cruel a heap of stones as the unlucky brute could well have picked out for the occasion. I was only a little behind, but saw nothing but a sudden disappearance of the Tâtar's green and gold jacket, a roll and tumble, and then the poor fellow upon the ground, separate from his prostrate steed, writhing, apparently in great pain.

I jumped off to assist him, but he motioned us away, and continued rolling and twisting in such a manner, like a scotched snake, that I made no doubt he had sustained some serious injury; and it was ten minutes at least before he would suffer us to help him to his legs. When we did, he could not stand, which confirmed me in the opinion that some bone was broken: but such, fortunately, did not prove to be the case. The injury was obviously in the right hip and thigh, and the utter powerlessness it occasioned afforded a convincing proof of its severity. Nevertheless we had no alternative but to lift him on his horse; and after all he got better down to Ak-Palanka than we had reason to expect. There we proposed to leave him; but the poor man, anxious to perform his contract, and thus to earn the hoped-for gratuity, would go on, and in half an hour he was lifted again to his horse, and on the way to Nissa, though almost fainting with pain.

After scampering for a few miles along this beautiful plain, by the full and red river, we turned sharp up a pretty and gradual ascent to cross the last Balcan. The road, devious enough, and very

deep in mud as it advanced, wound up the slope of a wooded mountain to a pass where there has at all times been a guard-house, and which you could not, till lately, pass without a guard of soldiers to protect you from the robbers by which it was infested. It is not, I think, above two years ago that my companion was put in danger of his life by a rascal, who took a cool aim at him with a long gun from behind some bushes, as he rode up. Mr. C——, observing this proceeding, clapped spurs to his horse, and baffled the fellow's purpose, who, it seems, could not shoot flying. The approach of the rest of the party made him take to flight. At this time all danger was over, it appeared; at all events, we neither heard of nor saw any, unless it might be that of getting bogged in the deep mud, among the roots and stumps of the trees; yet, bad as we found the road, how much better and less toilsome was it than when last I crossed the same pass, in a mixture of mud and ice!

On the other side is a rapid descent, which we trotted gallantly down to a beautiful ravine, rich in all the beauty of budding spring. The beech-trees here were far forward, and the thorns and wild pear-trees, not only pushing forth their tender leaves, but covered with sheets of white blossom. Thousands of cowslips and violets, grape, hyacinths, primroses, and other sweet flowers of the wilderness, formed a carpet beneath them, which offered a sore temptation to the weary wayfarer; but we were like evil spirits pursued by the furies,—restless like that unhappy bird of the Bosphorus; and

away, away we scoured along the beautiful plain of Nissa, all cultivated like a garden, the town itself rising in the purple distance, with its domes and minarets all glittering in the setting sun.

Scarcely did we stop for a moment to see what they call in Persia a *Kellà-minâr*, or tower of skulls, which the humane Osmanlees constructed near the eastern entrance of the city, of the heads of the Servians whom they slew, in their war with that people. Many of them still occupy their places in the niches of the tower into which they have been built; but still more have fallen out from the effects of time and weather, or have been picked out by the people of the country; so that, in no long time, it is probable that this ghastly and disgusting trophy will cease to exist. We reached Nissa a little after seven in the evening; and having ordered horses and a dinner, proceeded to solace our weary limbs in a Turkish bath; the best thing possible to restore circulation, and remove that soreness of muscle, which long and hard riding is sure to give. Our bath proved better, in its way, than our dinner, which, after no small promise on the part of our host of the posthouse, turned out to be nothing better than a dish of plain boiled rice, with a little butter, which the good folks of the coffee-room honoured with the respectable appellation of pillaw: a sad misnomer.

Our Tâtar had by this time discovered that he was unable to proceed, and thus perforce consented to remain behind: and after a vain attempt, on our part, to procure a substitute for him on reasonable

terms, and an effort on theirs to do us out of an extravagant hire, my companion, who knew the road perfectly well, resolved just to take another Suragee to whip on the horses, and make the best of our way without any Tâtar whatever. This being sorely adverse to the gainful schemes of the postmaster and his friend, who had offered himself as a substitute for our Tâtar, they made stout opposition; but they could not refuse us horses, and little recked we of their displeasure; so off we set at eleven o'clock of a fine star-light night, upon a ten hours' stage to Razna.

A little way from Nissa we passed the frontier of Turkey Proper, and entered the territories of the emancipated state of Servia, trotting and galloping away by turns, our ears delighted by the song of thousands of nightingales, and our spirits raised by the rapidity of our progress toward the termination of our toils. So numerous were the sweet songsters of night that you would have sworn there was one at least in every bush of the thick coppice we were threading: and the notes of one scarcely grew faint upon the ear, as we galloped along, before they were replaced by those of some other vocalist, as in catches the consecutive parts of the air are taken up in turn by the several voices.

As morning approached, the music of the nightingales was exchanged for that of the cuckoo, which was full as loud, if not so charming, as we gradually rose among the fine swelling hills, half covered with forest; and at five o'clock in the morning of

the 28. popped down upon the pretty Servian town of Razna, having made our forty miles in six hours. Our rapid and pleasant progress, during this stage, was greatly owing to the spirited exertions of a fine active fellow of a Suragee, who took on himself the part of Tâtar, and did certainly whip on the nags in good style: it was pleasant to hear his cheerful voice *Haidee*-ing on his less mercurial companion, and vying in loudness, if not in melody, with the nightingales around us; we could see him, notwithstanding the darkness, every now and then casting back a look for approbation; and then there was another yah ullah! and on again. He would fain have induced us to promote him to the rank of Tâtar for the trip to Belgrade, and commenced aping the Tâtar way of tying his head-gear; but it would not do, so rewarding him with a present that left him no cause for discontent, after only an hour's detention we mounted again for another forty miles' stage, to Jagodina, the capital of the country.

The country was beautiful, forest and cultivation, hill and dale, the day fine, and our horses good; so we fared on merrily, stopping at a very nice village, Pannakeen, to breakfast on some capital kebaubs, and wine. The latter was very good, and, oh! what a country for a drunkard! only about three halfpence per bottle. In passing through this and others of the Servian villages, we could not avoid being struck by the appearance of rapid improvement which both they and the country exhibited. Not only were there no ruinous buildings

either in them or in the towns, but they all exhibited an air of neatness and repair savouring more of European than Asiatic arrangement, and scarcely one occurred in which we did not remark a number of new-built tenements, and others in the progress of construction. This was particularly striking at Jagodina itself, where we passed through one street in which there were at least twenty or thirty new houses in a forward state. Cultivation appeared on the increase in the same proportion. Scarcely did we ride two miles through the forest, without observing some new clearing; and the fires occasioned by burning oak logs, in order to prepare the ground for tillage, were conspicuous on all sides, as we rode along during the night.

Another particular that deserves remark is the general practice of inclosing almost every piece of cultivation, except in the plains, where all was one sheet of corn-fields. I believe this care may have had its origin in the damage sustained by the multitudinous herds of hogs, which would make short work with all the corn in the forest lands not so protected; but the habit is a good one, and gives an air of care and neatness to the environs of a village, which is very pleasing to the eye. Some of these fences are made merely of split oak logs, laid horizontally, the ends crossing one another in a series of salient and re-entering angles. Others are constructed of slender stakes stuck in the ground, and fixed at top and bottom by an interlacement of withies. Others, again, were just the "stake and

rice" fence of England; while a fourth sort was fabricated, with great neatness, either of a sort of reed stuck in the ground and bowed and woven together at the top; or of long small saplings and boughs treated in the same way.

So plentiful is wood, and so rude the art of the carpenter, that, as in Mazunderan, and in America, and probably all countries where materials are more abundant than labour, the houses are frequently made of logs laid on end, and the interstices stopped with mud; and, strange to say, so unacquainted are they with the use of the saw, that most of their planks are made of split logs, dubbed smooth by the hatchet or adze. In the towns, however, many of the houses are more solidly built of brick or stone, although a great deal of wood still enters into their construction; and all, except those of the poorest, are roofed with tiles. White-washing is made much use of; and this, with the absence of ruins, imparts to these towns the attractive air of neatness of which I speak.

The town of Jagodina stands in one of those pleasant smiling plains which enliven the forest-covered mountains of this noble country; but although it is the capital town of the state, its sovereign, Milosh, now, by the grace of Russia, hereditary duke of Servia, does not live there; he has a country-house at a village some six hours distant, I believe, where he resides in a sort of feudal and baronial state. Strange to say, in spite of the activity and improvement that appear to pervade the country, it was at this capital that our good fortune in getting for-

ward failed us, and we suffered a more vexatious detention than any that had occurred since leaving Constantinople. There is some defect in the posting arrangements at this place—some job or evil influence which, as we learned, often occasions serious delay to travellers, and which, unfortunately for us, was in operation when we arrived. Our request for horses on the instant was met by a point-blank declaration that there were none in the stables, nor would there be any until the following morning, when some that had just returned from a journey would be ready to proceed again.

This was a sad damper for travellers so eager to get forward as we were; and as getting into Belgrade the following afternoon, in time to cross, would just make to us the difference of a day's quarantine, we pressed the matter hard; but it was all in vain, no difference did our urgency make in the postmaster's reply; so, vowing that we should make fearful complaints against him in the proper quarter, we lay down to take a little rest.

I had slept perhaps an hour, during which time my companion, who knew the *carte-du-pays* well, had been prowling about to discover, if possible, the means of getting on, when in came two Tâtars, connected, as they declared, with the Sultan's post, or charged with despatches, who demanded an instant supply of five cattle to proceed. At first they received the same reply as we did; but, as we observed in the head Suragee a strong disposition to favour them, and that instead of lying down to take their rest as we were doing, they kept prowling about the

stables, where, in spite of the postmaster's assurance to the contrary, there were some five or six animals that looked neither sick nor sorry, my companion thought it well to watch them. At length, however, they also appeared to acquiesce in what could not be avoided, and one, at least, went to sleep; upon which my companion, satisfied that all was safe, lay down to take a nap, while I remained on guard against surprise. It was well I did so, for not half an hour had elapsed when I saw a horse brought to one side of the coffee-house where we sat, and the Tâtar who had not gone to sleep, with the head Suragee, commenced loading him with a pair of large bags. This was clear treason; so I reluctantly wakened my companion, who had need of rest, but who instantly arose, and sallied forth to the scene of action.

His appearance there was anything but opportune for the two conspirators, who were thus attempting to steal a march upon us: for he at once forbid the *bans;* and, taking hold of the horse's halter with one hand, and of the rope with which they were tying on the load with the other, swore that, first come should be first served, and that not a horse should start from that post till we English couriers, and first comers, had been served and expedited. This interruption was as unwelcome as unexpected to the Tâtar and his friend, who tried, first by treating us with contempt, then by remonstrating, and then by rude blustering and force, to get rid of our interference and proceed with their operations; but they found themselves resisted with a firmness that rendered this impossible, and I had, moreover, got

hold of the right end of the rope by which I drew the Suragee's fingers into a nip that made him glad to let go; so that, seeing they could prevail nothing, they abandoned forcible measures, and re-commenced a war of words—not of abuse—*that* they dared not use; while we limited our replies to simple declarations, that load they should not until we had been served. This calmness had its effect, especially as they knew and could not but recognise the official character of my companion. They blustered, indeed, a good deal about Sultaun Mahmood and their own important business, and once or twice made a demonstration at re-commencing to load; but a counter-demonstration on the part of my companion to cut the ropes if they persisted, arrested their hands, until the sleeping Tâtar, having awakened at the row, came up, when, encouraged by this reinforcement, they again made a vigorous attempt to load. On this my companion coolly but firmly unhooked the rope from the crook-saddle, on which both the bags fell to the ground. Great was their rage, and as they clustered round as if to hustle him, I began to think the matter getting serious; but drawing back with a loud contemptuous shout of warning, he merely *showed* them an English clenched fist — a weapon which, with the look of him who wielded it, had so sedative an effect upon their nerves that they altogether desisted from force, and contented themselves during the remainder of the dispute, which lasted full two hours, with loud and angry remonstrance.

My companion told them coolly in reply to every-

thing they said, that if they had anything to say against him, they must address themselves to the proper authority; as for him, he insisted on having the matter decided by the postmaster, who had not showed his face during the row, though, it turned out, that he was no further distant than the stables. "Go you to the *Baleoos*, (consul)," retorted the Tâtars, giving this appellation to some magistrate or other in the town,—"go *you* to the Baleoos, we will stay here—no doubt he will give you justice, if you complain of injustice." The contemptuous laugh with which we received their cool proposal of thus abandoning our post and the field to them, enraged them to the utmost, and assuredly there never were more angry men than our two opponents. At length, the postmaster, who was discovered in the stable, seeing the worst of the battle over, and a sulky truce prevailing, took heart of grace, and came forward at our summons. Upon being taxed by us with the impropriety of his own and his Suragees' conduct, he excused himself, and assured us that he had made arrangements by which both parties should be despatched by sunset, and ours *first*. So, having ascertained so far as possible that he was sincere in his professions, and seeing the active little Tâtar himself assume the horizontal position, we too made ourselves as comfortable as possible until the promised hour of departure.

During the whole of this row, which perhaps you may think I have related at greater length than it merits, not a soul bearing the slightest appearance of authority made himself visible. The fact is, that

Turks and Tâtars are disliked so much by the Servians, that it would not have been with them, in all probability, that the people of the town, had they dared, would have taken part—and this the Tâtars well knew; in no other part of Turkey, perhaps, should we have been able to maintain our right and carry our point. You will remark, however, that it was done even here, by carefully abstaining from the least thing that could be construed into aggression, and we succeeded certainly by the temperate forbearance, not less than the spirited firmness, of my companion.

The most amusing part of the affair was, the cool and easy manner in which, when all was over, and the horses were brought, our little evil spirit of an opponent sought for a reconciliation. There was before us some good Greek wine, which we had been drinking with our bread and cheese, and the fellow, hopping up upon the platform where we sat, with a smile, but scarcely a word of compliment, seized hold of the vessel and poured out a tumbler for himself. I stared at him for a moment or two and then burst out laughing, at which, somewhat abashed and irresolute, he put it down again. But I insisted that he should drink what he filled, only saying to his companion as well as I could, "Here's a fellow now!—he abuses us black and blue, would take our horses, leave us in the lurch, cut our throats, I suppose, and yet without, 'with your leave, or by your leave,' he falls upon our infidel wine! Mashallah!—well, Khoosh Guelden, ye are welcome,"—so they both laughed and drunk our

wine, and then out they went to help to load our horses, which they did with most bustling activity.

We did not stop to inquire whether we had got the *best* as well as the first horses, and bad must those of the two Tâtars have been if they were worse than ours: that of my companion, stumbled at every step. Off we went, about six o'clock, after a detention of nearly seven hours, not in the best of humour, to commence a very bad bit of road, through forest, in a louring evening. Oh, what a weary way was it through the black wood to Battachino! a village about halfway on our stage, the wind rising, the rain beating, our only Suragee drunk, and my friend's horse stumbling at every step. It is not always the quantity you have done that causes lassitude and exhaustion.—We had only ridden between one hundred and fifty and one hundred and sixty miles from Khalkhallee, where we slept some six or seven hours, to Jagodina, where we also halted nearly seven; but this halt, far from being a rest, was more of a fag in mental exertion than had we continued all the time on horseback; so that an anxious and painful ride of nearly six hours to Battachino made us very ready to come-to for a little, and avoid the danger of sticking in a road where we could scarcely see our way, and a drenching from the fast-falling rain. I shall not easily forget how eagerly, in passing along, I scanned every tree, that rose like a giant on the dull leaden sky, in hopes of seeing the peculiar form of one which my companion informed me stood near the entrance

of the village, and how ill I took each petty disappointment, as one after another deceived our hopes.

Our refuge from the road and from the storm, was in a great rude house, warmed by the charred limbs of a huge oak stump that lay half consumed at one end. By the side of this we stretched ourselves among the half-sleeping inmates of the family, and after having refreshed ourselves with a capital pot of tea, slept as well as our reeling heads and excited spirits would permit for about four hours—that is till four in the morning of the 29th April. But it was six before we were on horseback; for we had to fight a stout battle for better horses. We trotted it in three hours and a half to Hassan Pashah Palanka, through a fine country, with lovely breaks in the forest, and cheered by the lively song of our Suragee, who was also the Cahwagee or coffee-maker of the establishment; a merry fellow, with a capital voice, and inexhaustible good humour. The oak was just here and there bursting into leaf, but the multitude of thorns were all in full blow, and the air was delicious. About half way on, we overtook a person walking at a good pace in the dress of a Frank, who turned out to be a Frenchman, who had come from a distant part, I forget where, in the East, but was last from Constantinople, and all the way on foot. At Adrianople, he had been seized with a severe fever, and detained by its effects for two months; but by the blessing of the "Bon Dieu," he had recovered, and was so far on his way to Belgrade, from whence he

hoped to find the means of returning again to his native country. I could not help being struck with the perfect good humour with which this poor fellow bore, and seemed willing to bear, all the hardships of his weary way, and the content with which he received the meagre crumbs of sustenance or comfort, which a semi-barbarous peasantry bestowed on him, or yielded to his very moderate means of purchase. We gave him something to assist him onwards, and soon left him behind, but resolutely plodding towards his object.

We breakfasted at Hassan Pashah Palanka, on a capital bowl of boiled calavances, well seasoned with red pepper and onions, ladled from the same copper whence many of the villagers were served; and I would strenuously recommend the same dish to all hungry travellers whom chance may send through Servia. We finished off with an excellent bottle of wine, and were entertained during our meal with a tune on the bag-pipe played by a Servian boy, who, with a party of country people, was sitting at the coffee or eating-house where we breakfasted. He played capitally, and several of his airs would, I suspect, have made a good highland piper jealous.

It is strange how season and weather can alter the aspect of a country. Assuredly, when I passed through Servia only some sixteen months before, in all the discomfort of frost and snow and rain, I observed little of the beauty, and still less of the cultivation, that was now so striking. I remember, at that time, thinking the country dreadfully

bare, both of population and cultivation; the villages few and miserable. I now, on the contrary, observed many villages, and village smokes, arising from the densest looking parts of the forest, a great deal of good cultivated land, and large clearings, and a wonderful advance in all the tokens of national prosperity. What caused this change? — surely not the real advance of improvement in so short a time—was it not rather something in myself and the operation of external causes on the spirits that occasioned much of the difference, something like the contrast drawn by that nervous and true painter of nature and the human passions, that merciless barer of the human heart, Crabbe, between the journey of the ardent lover, proceeding to meet his mistress, and that of the disappointed lover, returning sad and miserable by the same way. Should not this consideration make us all cautious how we suffer feelings of irritation and disappointment,— ay, or of ill-founded satisfaction and joy, to colour the descriptions we attempt to give of countries or of men?

The lovely morning, the gay costume of the villagers, in which crimson and scarlet form so prominent a part, and the pretty faces of the women, now altogether open to the free air of heaven, united with the sense of our rapid progress towards a resting-place, in raising our spirits. The postmaster was as kind and civil as those of yesterday had been dogged, (by the by, we found that this man was the real contractor of Jagodina; he with whom we had had to do being but a deputy), and by the time our bean-soup was

finished, our baggage was fixed upon capital horses, and at half-past ten we cantered off to Charjick, ten or eleven hours, which we performed in four and a-half.

Charjick, the last stage to Belgrade, is on the Danube—that river, which now was all that separated us from civilized Europe! and it was not without a tumultuous emotion of delight, that I saw its swollen waters rolling sullenly along, through the openings in the forest, with the flat plains of the Banat stretching out beyond them. We could even perceive the towers of Orsova, and several other Christian towns, though the whole was darkened by a threatening cloud, which had by this time mustered in the sky.

At Charjick, the Suragees seemed animated with our own impatience; indeed, we did not spare a few piastres to quicken their movements; and half-an-hour saw us mounted for the last time, and scouring away for Belgrade. We flew at a gallop, through the twenty miles of fine and cultivated country that now alone intervened between us and our goal, and a little more than an hour and a half brought us in sight of the grey old bulwark of Islam. By six o'clock we were in the Servian town, and a few minutes more saw us established in the house of a German *traiteur*, who has married a woman of the country, and keeps a sort of hotel at this place. Need I expatiate on, need I mention the delight with which I saw the obstacles that separated us from our own Europe, thus rapidly disappear, and that I looked across the water to that prison which

was to be our dwelling for the next ten days — that purgatory which was to prepare us for the heaven of home? "Fare thee well, beast!" said I, patting the neck of the panting little Turkish poster that had borne me so gallantly, as I dismounted from its back. "I trust thou art the last of thy kind I shall ever mount, and that now I am done with thee!" But in this last hope I was mistaken, for as it was too late to cross; but not too late to enjoy the comforts of a bath, we once more mounted our horses to go through the dirty streets to the Hummaum.

We needed this comfort; our last brush, that is, from Battachino to Belgrade, of about ninety miles, had been done in twelve hours, on a very hot close day, and in garments not at all suited for violent exercise in such weather. And we had completed the whole distance, from Constantinople to Belgrade, seven hundred and fifty miles, or thereabouts, in a little less than seven days; of which, rather more than one had been consumed in unavoidable delays. After our needful purification we retired to our quiet chamber, and how we did revel in long draughts of lemonade, and wine and water, to cool our feverish frames; and then the good well-dressed dinner that was set Christianwise before us! But that which we enjoyed more than either, was the clean comfortable bed which was prepared for each of us, and the deep, though disturbed sleep that soon fell upon us, disturbed by dreams of driving on worn-out posthorses, and urging sullen Suragees to speed.

I think by this time you must be nearly as weary as I was, in spirit if not in flesh, so having brought you to a resting-place, I will not cheat you of repose. I will speak of our entrance into limbo in my next.

LETTER XIX.

Austrian Guard-houses.—Entrance into Limbo.—Ceremonies thereon.—Lodgings.—Arrangements.—A Day in Quarantine.—Description of the Lazaretto.—Ceremonies and Arrangements on Exit.—A Supper.—National Dishes and Games.—Arrival of Courier.—Start from Semlin.—Bad Roads and Horses.—Carlovitz.—Peterwaradin.—Keep the Right Bank of the Danube.—Sclavonian Scenery.—Essek its Capital.—Fünfkerkhen.—Post-horses found by the Proprietors of Estates.—Grand Kanitza.—Stein-en-Anger.—Guntz.—Oldenburgh.—Reach Vienna.—Arrangements.—Leave Vienna.—Rapid Course to Frankfort, Brussels, and Home.

DEAR ——,

I BADE adieu to you just as I was going to prison. As it is generally more convenient to do one's own business than to have it done for one, we provided, so far as we could, for our confinement, by laying in such necessaries and conveniences as were more easily to be procured here than at Semlin. After these arrangements and a good breakfast, we got into a boat and rowed across the Savah to Semlin. The perfect liberty of egress and ingress which one enjoys at Belgrade, and generally in Turkey, forms a strong contrast to the annoyance that awaits the traveller upon landing upon the Austrian shore. All along the bank you see guardhouses raised on wooden piles or stone, in which watchmen are stationed to prevent

intercourse of any kind with the opposite shore, to keep infection aloof and hinder smuggling. A circumstance happened not long ago, which has occasioned a preference for guardhouses of stone rather than of wood. In winter and early spring, the whole low tract on the right bank of the Savah is overflowed by the melting snow, so that there is no communication between these insulated and elevated posts except by boat. One night one of them took fire, and the unfortunate guard had before them the chance of being burned or drowned. They clung, however, manfully to the timbers, in spite of the fire which consumed them nearly to the water's edge, and were actually saved; and since then, all new ones have been built of stone.

We tracked up the river, and by a little after nine we landed, received by a guard, with sticks to keep us off, and marched to the quarantine. The cold and inhospitable character of this reception, occasions disgust to strangers, and I heard of one English gentleman who took fire at the action of an Austrian officer, to whom he had inconsiderately approached too near, and who started back, and presented the point of his stick to the unconscious transgressor. Our countryman forgot, or rather did not know that had he accidentally but touched the other, it would have subjected him to ten days' quarantine. "These are your Frank customs," observed a Tâtar, who had come to deposit his charge in the Lazaretto; "this is your Frank hospitality!—who comes here to bid you '*Khoosh guelden suffa guelden?*'—there is nothing here but keep off! and the bayonet point!" Never-

theless, even in our short walk it was delightful to mark the traces of European civilization, in the neat gravelled walks and hedges. Even the workmen in their shirt-sleeves, leather aprons, and caps, and some with broad hats, looked home-like and welcome; and though I am not partial to the Austrian black eagle, nor the white or grey uniform, or the odd shakoes of the troops, they were pleasant to my eyes, as the attributes of a cognate nation. Very ungrateful all this, to be sure, to the poor Turks, who certainly were neither troublesome in general, nor deficient in a sort of passive kindness.

Well, we passed the jaws of limbo, and were ushered into a brick-floored room, with a railed passage at one side, where the officials of this inquisition come to hold converse with the unhappy wights that fall into their clutches. Here, after a little delay, a person came to us, who, after some communication with the superintendants, desired us to open all packages. In this duty he assisted; and after all were emptied, he went on to arrange them in his own fashion, in order to have them inventoried. This was a most annoying business, for not only were all our own arrangements upset, but even the minutest articles were opened and huddled together. All my little packages of antiquities and curiosities, which had been carefully assorted and sealed up, were opened and thrown together, to be counted in a lump. Certain things were marked, as to be sealed for transit; the rest were mingled higledy-pigledy upon cloths or handkerchiefs, spread upon the floor.

After this process was completed, we were asked what money we had, whether or not we had a watch, and, finally, whether we had showed everything in our possession. A description was then taken of each, with a note of our birth-place, and official character, stating whether we were or were not married, &c., according to the set form. Our money was passed through water, and all letters intended to remain in our possession, while in quarantine, pierced and fumigated. These various forms and operations occupied no small time; and after all was over, we were told we might pack up our things so as to carry them to our room. In this we were assisted by a man connected with the establishment, who is termed a *guardian*, and is attached to our persons, not only to prevent our having connection with others, or others with us, but as our servant and assistant.

In time, the chaos was so far arranged as to be transportable, and we were marched off to a small house containing two comfortable rooms, nicely painted and whitewashed, floored with wood, and furnished with a bedstead, table and chair each, and divided by a passage, in which was a place for making a fire, cooking, &c.; perfect delights after the abominable posthouses, and other lodgings we had been accustomed to for so long. Here, after a few arrangements, and despatching some letters by the Vienna post, we enjoyed a comfortable dinner, and a still more refreshing nap, after all our bustle, till tea-time. The evening was idled away in that delightful state of indolent and careless repose which

the mind, as well as the body so much enjoys, after long-continued exertion, when sweetened by the consciousness that it is not to be broken by any call of duty or of necessity. So far, indeed, from grumbling, or feeling impatient at the confinement of the next ten days, I felt absolutely grateful for the uninterrupted quiet which they promised. Had I been free to proceed, it would have been my duty as well as my desire to do so without a moment's delay, and I should have reached England, harassed in mind and body, to enter on another species of active employment, without the refreshment of repose. In the ten days of confinement thus forced upon me, and which, therefore, I could enjoy with a safe conscience, how much might I not do in arranging my thoughts and various matters of business, as well as in refreshing my body! Verily I blessed the quarantine of Semlin, and in my secret heart did not desire that it should be shortened by a single day.

Before quitting the ceremonies of entrance into this durance, let me observe that, clumsy and oppressive as the whole business appears, it is said, and perhaps with truth, that what gives most trouble, the practice of examining and making inventories of every article, however trifling, has arisen from a scrupulous care to preserve from loss or pillage the property of those who may enter quarantine; but with the Austrian executive, as with the government, the letter of an ordinance often supersedes the spirit, and a blind obedience being the principle of action here, as in all despotic governments, those

who carry the law into effect, think less of the inconvenience they may create, than of strictly complying with their instructions; unless, indeed, when some still more forcible *consideration* is brought to bear upon the question, and change the light in which they had previously viewed it. At this time, the exhibition of such considerations would have had anything but a favourable effect; for there had lately been a quarrel among the officials, which tended to let out some ugly facts, and led to certain changes that, for the time, deranged the accommodating economy of the establishment, and occasioned a degree of strictness which was the very reverse of convenient to us.

There is also a more than ordinary strictness observed here, with regard to strangers in custom-house matters: for the smuggling trade between Turkey and Hungary is carried on to such an extent, as to make the government particularly jealous of every one who crosses the frontier; and truly the temptation is sufficiently great in some articles: for instance, the tobacco which you may smoke for a few pence a pound in Turkey, will cost you in Austria, from duty alone, about as many shillings. But of all articles which are brought from Turkey, the Austrian government is the most scrupulous about shawls. These articles of dress are manufactured in Austria, and therefore the lieges of that country are permitted to wear none of any other fabric. Even the transit through the country of such goods as are prohibited is accompanied with no small difficulty. The way adopted, gene-

rally, is to inventory them, make them up into bales or packages, and seal them with the imperial seal stamped upon lead. Such a parcel is delivered to the owner provided he can find security for their not being opened till he shall have passed the frontier; and, fortunately, there are always to be found some accommodating persons, who, for a moderate premium, will give this security; on your arrival at the frontier with the seals safe, and the weight of the bags unaltered, a release is sent to your security, whose bond is then discharged.

From the account I have given you of our quarters, you will judge that, for people who had gone through a good deal of privation, we were not likely to be ill off. A good bed for each of us had been provided, at the hire of something more than a shilling per night. The bread and butter of Semlin are capital, so that with these, our own tea and coffee, and some other little additions, we breakfasted in a style to which I had been for many months unaccustomed; an excellent dinner of five or six *plats*, with very good Hungarian wine, cost us not above two shillings. Thus we had no reason to complain of our fare; nor did our time pass unagreeably. About six in the morning the porter of the quarantine goes round and opens the door of each lazaretto; on which our guardian, who is locked up at night with us, issues forth for butter and milk, returning to get the fire ready. By this time we were generally on foot ourselves, and ready about seven to take the cup of coffee which our guardian presented to us. From that time till nine I used to

employ myself in writing or walking to and fro before the door of our prison. About nine comes the doctor, to see how we all are. He asks his questions, and receives our replies, standing aloof at the door, directs a fumigation to our rooms, persons, and goods, which remain for the purpose stretched out on the floor of our respective rooms. Writing, and various arrangements occupy us till four, when comes dinner and good appetite together, and during the afternoon, to prevent our blood from stagnating, we take another energetic walk up and down our little court-yard. Nor be it supposed that we are altogether unsupplied with food for the mind. Mr. Steineus, whose praises as a kind obliging person I have sung, I think, before, soon sent us his literary treasures, as he calls them, consisting of certain odd volumes of novels, a copy of Tom Jones, Gallignani's edition of Lord Byron's Poems, History of Greece, a volume or two of Shakspeare, &c.; being books left, after being read,

"like sere flowers to be thrown aside,"

by various travellers, when the dreary term of quarantine was over.

Such was the calm and even tenour of our day, and the history of one was the history of all. Now and then some kind friend from the town would come to see how we were, and tell us a piece of news; and thus we heard of the several changes in the ministry of our own country: but for the most part we were left to our own resources, and never did I weary; for when tired of writing or

reading, or conversation, I had but to sit down calmly and pass the events of the last two years in review through the glass of busy memory, or, what was still more pleasing, permit imagination to take a gallop forwards, and picture the blessed hour that should restore me to home and friends.

I have not yet given an account of the localities of this sanatory establishment. It is a large square inclosed by a high brick wall, which also serves for that of the town upon that side; but the inclosure is divided from the town by regular gates and approaches. This inclosure, which I should suppose to be from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards across, is divided in the centre by a broad gravel road which leads from the entrance to a long line of buildings which is called the *Parlatoire*, where the inhabitants of the town may come and hold intercourse through openings in a partition with persons coming on business from the other side, who, of course, cannot be permitted to pass except into the Lazarettos. These Lazarettos are separate buildings, ranged on three sides of the square, some of them being divided for two, others for four sets of occupants. That which was appropriated to us was divided only for two, and had been rendered in many respects more comfortable than the rest, particularly in having a boarded instead of a brick or tile floor, being prepared, as I believe, for the reception of Namick Pashah, or some other Turkish ambassador, on his way to Europe by Semlin. It was now appropriated for the reception of British cabinet couriers and tra-

vellers of the better class, and really they had little cause to complain.

Each of these lazarettos was surrounded by a little yard, railed in with high palisadoes, to prevent egress or ingress contrary to rules. The space before each door did not exceed sixty or seventy feet in length, by fifteen to twenty in breadth; narrow bounds enough, seeing it was all we had to take exercise in; and to persons accustomed for a long time past to so much violent action, the confinement, one would have thought, likely enough to produce ill effects. Formerly it was otherwise. The prisoners were permitted to take the air in the large inclosure attended by their guardians: and even, I believe, occasionally to take longer walks in places where contact with others was not likely to occur, as on the banks of the river below the town. But the folly of some young Englishmen who, I dare say, little imagined the serious mischief they were doing to future travellers, and who played some foolish tricks, put an end to this useful privilege, and at this time the aforesaid small space was all we had to breathe the air in. All the windows looked into the great inclosure, which was appropriated to merchandise, also performing quarantine, especially cotton bags, of which there were many hundreds, which were turned and beaten daily by men, I suppose to drive the evil spirit of infection out of them. In this square there were plenty of groups constantly passing and repassing, and often were we amused by seeing parties arriving from the other side, in the same

predicament as ourselves, to enter limbo — sometimes half a dozen or more would pack into one room, and there seemed to be little distinction made of age or sex, all of a party went into the same den; among others, some two or three days after our own arrival, who should we see but our friend the pedestrian Frenchman, walking in with his sober steady gait, to commence his purification, and we recommended him strongly to the attention of some of our friends. The Tâtar too, whom we had left hurt at Nissa, came limping in upon a stick, bringing his son to see us, in hopes, I presume, of extracting from us a large present; for the demands he made after all were such as to leave us no cause to compliment him on his moderation.

After all, to those who have cause for impatience, and desire to proceed, or who are of a nervous and hypochondriac temperament, a confinement of ten days or a fortnight (it varies according to the accounts of plague at Constantinople), would go far, in my opinion, to bring on, instead of preventing, illness; and if it does, God help them! — for, as nothing but plague runs in the head of the sanatory officers, any one falling sick would at once be set down as a plague subject, and treated accordingly; that is, probably, left to die, whatever might be the distemper, from neglect and lengthened confinement; for, of course, no release from confinement could be obtained while illness continued. So much alarmed are people for such a contingency, that those who do fall ill generally conceal their sickness as long as they

can, in hopes of being released before it can be discovered. I myself acted on this principle; for about four or five days after arriving I felt far from well. I was convinced it could not be plague—the infection must have showed itself during the exertion and lassitude of the journey; but I knew that were it known, we should have a week's additional confinement, at least, so I kept my own secret, doctored myself, and, by the blessing of God, got well in a couple of days. I believe the dampness of the place and the great quantity of rain that fell while we were in it, occasioned my indisposition; I was more afraid of intermittent fever than of plague.

May 10.—After being much annoyed by customs and health officers, we are at length once more free men. Although thankful for the period of rest we have enjoyed, our minds, during the last two or three days, got restless, and we grew weary of our narrow bounds; although, until the arrival of another courier with despatches, we cannot start. This morning, therefore, it was no unwelcome sight to see the doctor arrive to release us, which he did just at the hour in which, ten days before, we had entered our abode of durance. After the usual salutation and inquiry, he advanced and took us each by the hand; the spell was broken, and we were free! We took a glass of cordial together, and followed it up with another little ceremony which seemed no less satisfactory, and he bade us farewell, expressing a hope of meeting us at dinner at the ordinary in the town.

Next came the officers of customs, the quarantine

governors and sub-governors; in short, a multitude of hungry wolves: and then came another vexatious business about baggage and inventories, and articles to be *plombé* and articles to be passed, &c. enough to fret a saint; and this, too, when the fellows were as much disposed as I was, in the hope of gain, to smooth all difficulties. Figure to yourself the following instance:—There was mention made in the inventory of some pieces of wood, or branches of some tree, which were not to be found on re-examining the baggage. Here was a business! How were we to get on without finding this missing timber?—what could it be?—None of us could tell: at last one of the officers saw a little bag with some half dozen acorns, which I had picked up at Koordistan. "Aha! here they are," said he; "I knew it was something of this sort; but the fellow was a fool, and did not know how to write it down." In gathering up my letters, a few faded violets, gathered in the Ambassador's garden at Terapia, fell from one of them. "It is well for you, sir," remarked Steineus, who was assisting, "that they did not see these; they would infallibly have been put in the inventory, and a thousand to one if you would ever have discovered what they meant. I assure you these violets might have given you both trouble and delay!"

At length "all was accomplished," the baggage packed, the officers satisfied at about a fifth of what would have contented the sharks of some other countries; and we moved from the quiet apartments which had been our asylum rather than our prison for the last ten days; but the work of *plombé*'ing

and bonding the contraband articles, detained our baggage till five in the afternoon.

May 11.—Yesterday we dined at the ordinary, where the dinner was better than the company; yet there were several Austrian officers and a countess in her own right, at table; the latter fat and rather pretty, and wonderfully disposed to flirt; but all rather inclined to *grossièreté!* In the evening we went by invitation to a farewell supper, given by a society of *chasseurs* to one of their members who was leaving Semlin. It was a very original and characteristic feast, and strongly reminded me of the Freyschuts; healths and *vivats* were sung in chorus, to excellent music, and there were some very good songs, in the same style, given by several members of the party. The supper itself consisted of national dishes, chiefly of mutton and lamb; a roasted animal of the latter description was handed in over the heads of the company, with loud applause, to the head of the table, where sat the young man who was the chief guest, and was by him cut up and handed round. The liquors used to mollify these solids were good Hungarian wine and stout Semlin beer, which is excellent of its kind.

After supper, there were a variety of laughable and somewhat gross games introduced; one of them, called "burning the ice mountain," consisted in fastening a large paper roll to the tail of a man's coat, who was supposed to have a mountain of ice in his stomach, and who eluded the efforts of another of the company to set this paper on fire with a candle. The humour of the game consisted in

the variety of whisks given to the inflammable substance by the tail of him of the iceberg, and the dashing about of the candle, tallow and all, in the vain efforts of the incendiary to effect his purpose.

Another ridiculous game, was "Putting the cock to sleep."—One of the party represented a cock, and began to crow with all his might. After some rigmarole tale, or explanation, one of the company sat down upon a chair, while the cock, kneeling before him, placed his head between the other's knees; and the point of the game consisted in his trying to catch the head of the said cock between his two hands, as it was jerked up and down, rapidly and unexpectedly, always uttering a loud "cock, cock, cock!" It was sad buffoonery like the other game, but one could not help laughing at seeing the grave and energetic efforts of him who sought to "put the cock to sleep," while the nimble fellow, who represented chanticleer, crowed triumphantly at each successful jerk, just like children playing at patting each other's palms and trying to catch the hand of the hitter. We were glad enough to retire from the revelry long ere it came to a close, for we knew that it could not be long until our orders should arrive, and it was necessary we should prepare to obey them.

Our presentiment was fulfilled this morning, for just as we sat at breakfast, we learned that the courier had arrived at the quarantine, and my companion went to receive and pass the despatches, while I employed myself in packing. We found that the courier, Mr. H. had had very bad weather,

and arrived very much knocked up after an eight days' journey. By two o'clock all was ready for a start—not on horseback as before, but in a comfortable light carriage, drawn by a pair of posters. Those furnished at Semlin were bad enough, which, as there had been an immense quantity of rain while we were in quarantine, and the roads of necessity were deep, promised bad speed. However, shaking hands with our friends, after a good parting glass of Hungarian champagne (no bad wine), off we went, and did the first post to Banossa, fifteen miles, by half past four. From thence, off at five, with execrable cattle; one of which fell on the way, never, I suppose, to rise, so that it was with the greatest difficulty that, by walking much of the way ourselves, we made out the stage of twenty miles by ten at night. Some heavy showers served to increase our difficulty.

The horses we got at Beshka (I think) were little better than the last; well did I remember the villanous set-out I had got from this post before, and it was of the same description now. We had a sad tug up hill, but the descent to Carlovitz, and from thence to Peterwaradin, was performed with more ease and celerity, if not without danger. A bright moon served to show us the cathedral and palace of the bishopric of Carlovitz, and lighted us into the strong fortress of Peterwaradin, about three in the morning of 12th May.

We left Peterwaradin, with two good horses, in about twenty minutes, but by a different route from that by which I came on my journey out; for we

kept the right bank of the Danube, and reached the village of Cherowitz two posts on, at six, where we took a hasty breakfast, and then on to Susseg, one post. Here no posters being obtainable, we took four peasant's horses on to Illock, which we reached by eleven o'clock, where, the cattle being out, and a little delay being unavoidable, we took the opportunity and had something to eat.

This is the road for seeing Hungary and Sclavonia to advantage, provided the season be favourable. The country, though flat, is verdant and charming; villages occur on the road every five miles, and there are many visible on either hand. Then you come, every now and then, upon the bank of the Danube, and look across upon the rich country that lies beyond it, prettily wooded, and studded with numerous towns and villages; with the beautifully winding river glancing every here and there, sometimes dotted with islands, sometimes in one deep broad stream. I counted about twenty steeples within a small space, all at once in view. In several parts the roads were bordered with avenues of trees, many of which were mulberries; and we saw numbers of women and girls climbing them, and stripping them of their leaves, I think—for they seemed sadly deficient in leaf—no doubt to feed silkworms.

Our dinner at Illock was but moderate. The horses they gave us proved capital. There were four, for which we paid the price of three; and the best whip in England might have taken a lesson from our ragged and tough coachman as he

drove, in an hour and a half, over a road of some intricacy to Oppotowitz. The weather was hot, though cloudy. The roads, which hitherto had been very deep in mud, were now drying up a little. All the trees, elm, beech, and mulberries, were in leaf, the country beautiful, and we in high spirits at getting on so fast and so comfortably. O what a contrast to the first part of my journey!—to the dreary night rides in frost, and snow, and misery! Well, let us be grateful.

The good-looking horses we got at Oppotowitz proved real slugs; and the road being bad, we were two hours in performing the one post to Vurcovar. There is now always a fight about taking four horses, but hitherto we have got off by paying for three. We required them all, indeed, on the road to Vera; for it was execrable. The country has now become a dead flat of deep black loam, which retains all the water that falls on it; so that ruts and ridges never dry. The track of our wheels, too, does not suit those of the small Hungarian carts, which makes our draught heavier than it should be. The country is everywhere well cultivated—much Indian corn, or maize, is grown; and we passed through a good deal of fine forest, evidently preserved. We still see the mulberry-trees, and women in every one of them.

A sulky postmaster at Vera; but we got on with four horses about eight in the evening, and reached Essek, the capital city of Sclavonia, by eleven at night, after paddling through a road half under water and of very tenacious mud. The whole

of this part of the country appears to be a swamp that has been turned into cultivation. Essek is a very strong fortress, upon the river Drave, which we passed here by a bridge. It is kept in capital order. Here our passports were *visa*'d, and we took coffee, and got off by a little after twelve. The road to Sascufell was a made road; but so bad that, though only one post and a quarter, we did not reach it till three in the morning of May 13. This, so far as we could discern, was a long straggling village, with vile, deep, muddy streets, and lies at a considerable distance from the main road; so that we had the utmost difficulty in getting to and from it. From hence a *chaussée* leads across to Pest; but we struck off across a low swampy tract to Labaunch, a small village, which we reached about five o'clock in the morning. It was a dull stage; and, from what we could judge by the imperfect moonlight, the country we passed in the night was by no means interesting or beautiful.

Off again at half-past six. A heavy muddy stage, over some rising grounds, and through a wood; and then through a most splendid expanse of cultivation, principally rye and Indian corn. Some of the fields of the latter could not have contained less than from forty to fifty acres. Our stage was Sikloss, an old castellated rock, like a fortified château, with a town clustered around its feet, and very picturesque. We did the stage in an hour; took coffee, and were off again in thirty-five minutes. Our road to Salanta lay alongside a series of heights rising on the right, covered with vine-

yards, while a finely cultivated plain lay on the left. We ran the stage gallantly in an hour and thirty-five minutes; changed horses in ten more; and ran the next to Fünfkirken (five churches) in an hour.

What a splendid and beautiful view was that of Fünfkirken from the height whence it first came in sight! A magnificent undulating plain of waving corn, studded thickly with villages on all sides, lay beneath, and beyond it rose the town, on the side of a lovely vineyard-covered hill, all sparkling with white buildings, churches, and villages. The town itself afforded a most pleasing union of white walls and towers with red roofs, harmonizing delightfully with the fresh untarnished green of spring—it is a noble country! Fünfkirken, which, with the rich country as far as the eye can reach, I believe, belongs to Prince Esterhazy, is a handsome town, and on no small scale; it was a pleasure to drive through its clean well-paved streets, crowded with people whom we recognised at once as of the same race and customs as ourselves. We just got to a capital hotel in time for an excellent dinner at the *table d'hôte*, that is at twelve precisely. Having heard of the excellence of the wine of Fünfkirken, we asked for some of the best. I advise all travellers to do the same wherever they are, rather than call for foreign wines, which are dear, and generally indifferent—they will always be better served. It was so with us; for the landlord, piqued for the honour of his country, placed before us some eighteen years' old

stuff, which we did not fail in doing justice to.—It was capital! like a very good wine of the Hock character, with fine flavour. Dinner, coffee, wine, and all cost us, I think, about eighteenpence each; and after an hour's rest, we rattled on to St. Laurent, also a mansion of Prince Esterhazy, who has all the fine intervening country. We saw fine flocks of Merino sheep upon the pastures, both to-day and yesterday, and many other symptoms of a highly improved state of agriculture.

The Prince "horses" this and several other stages on this road; a measure adopted by him and other noblemen, for the purpose of encouraging trade and traffic, and consequent improvement in their several countries. In ten minutes a pair of splendid greys, horses you would have gazed at in Hyde Park, were yoked to our little carriage; and away we went one post in an hour and twenty minutes to Seegatz, through alternate forest and cultivation and low swelling heights, with so many sweet villages and steeples—beautiful! The road, too, was excellent, made by Esterhazy; and there were hundreds of people, with thousands of their little Hungarian carts, drawn by bullocks, at work upon it. Indeed, we have got on swimmingly from Sikloss, for the road is all a well-made *chaussée*.

The road continued fine till near Isvanlec, which we reached about six o'clock in the evening, and where there was a villanous bad bit. Beyond this we entered a tract of sandhills and forest; dreadfully heavy work, but we had a pair of splendid black horses to drag us through. The forest much

resembled some parts of Scotland; fragrant birch, alder coppice, fern, and heather—capital cover for cocks! I can say little about the night; for the roads being fair, we slept a good deal between the stages. We were very hospitably treated by an old militaire at Baboiza, who, hearing us express a desire to purchase some bread, invited us to partake of his supper, one dish of which was asparagus, of immense size, done with white sauce, and most delicious it was.

At this place we got a pair of capital horses from the stud of a nobleman, through whose property the road passes; these animals are, I think, far superior to our coach cattle in England, although we take more out of them in pace than they do here. We had now one or two stages, I forget which, through forest, and by an indifferent and dangerous sandy road, to Grand-Kanitza, a large but straggling town, which we reached a little after four in the morning of May 14. From thence, still through forest, but the last quarter of the way through a wide and beautiful valley, to Harost, which we reached by seven. Here, greased wheels, took coffee, and off again in forty minutes to Szala—a beautiful drive through a fine valley, on the heights surrounding which the forest was grouped, and scattered, and spread, with all the effect of park scenery.

Szala, which we reached about half-past ten, has a fine church or castle, and some fine houses; but the streets, like those of most Hungarian towns, are wide, and miserably deep in bad weather. We were not detained here more than a quarter of

an hour, and then on (one post) to Barone, which we reached at twelve. This is the poorest village we have seen, and situated in the poorest country. The first part of our way lay down a beautiful valley, full of fine villages, and I was rejoicing in the idea that we were to continue in so pleasant a path, when, all on a sudden, the road took a turn up to the right, and brought us out upon barren downs, and over a tract of very poor soil. There was still a good deal of forest, however — birch, hornbeam, beech, and oak; but I was not sorry when we left it again, and, about half-past one, came down upon the nice small town of Kermand, where there is a fine palace, with pleasure-grounds, belonging, as I was informed, to the Batiani family.

Here we dined at an excellent hotel; and, about two o'clock, pushed on again, through a pleasant country, to Stein-am-Anger; a fine town, with a handsome cathedral and bishop's palace. Our next stage was Guens, or Guntz, which we reached not till six o'clock in the evening; after encountering a furious thunder-storm, which produced a most magnificent effect on the landscape. Of our two next stages, to Warasdorf and Oldenburgh, I can say little, as the night was dark; but the latter, as we drove through it, appeared to be a fine large town, and afforded us an excellent supper of veal-cutlets and asparagus.

The stages from thence to Grosshofen, Wintpassing, and Luxembourgh were rapidly passed, although in the dark; because the horses were Esterhazy's, therefore capital and quickly pro-

duced, and the postilions tight, well-dressed, and expert fellows. At the last place, where there is a fine palace, park, and *chasse*, belonging to the Emperor, we changed horses for the last time; and careering along the straight road, bordered by its magnificent trees, soon saw the tower of St. Stephen's shooting its tall spire above the intervening heights. The view of Vienna and its environs from this point is always splendid; but now embellished, not concealed, by a gauzy veil of morning mist — for its own wooden fuel produces little smoke — the *coup d'œil* was particularly charming. Need I tell you with what delight I hailed it, as the goal of many a wish — the termination of much suffering — the promise of better things yet to come. We reached its gates about half-past six, on the morning of the 15. May, when, having reported ourselves and delivered despatches at the British ambassador's palace, we retired to refresh and put ouselves in order at the hotel of the "Wilden Man."

To do this latter required more than the help of brush or towel — my clothes were worn to the last rag; and, to put the outward man in decent condition, the assistance of tailor and shoemaker was indispensable. There were other arrangements, too, necessary for my further progress; and I was too impatient to conclude these to feel fatigue. So, after discharging my duty at the British ambassador's, I proceeded with a *valet de place* to prepare for my departure at as early a moment as possible.

I was greatly disappointed at not finding our friends the H——s in Vienna to receive me; but it caused me the less to regret the short time I could spare to this fascinating capital. All that I enjoyed of its pleasures was going once to the opera, to hear the "Somnambula," with which I was much delighted. Next morning, at four, I was again in my carriage, and *en route*. I *now* did really feel getting close to home. A louring morning, but a lovely drive. At St. Petten's, we had such a pelt of rain as I thought would have driven in the head of the carriage. Dined at Moelk,—remarkable for its splendid monastery; reached Lintz about six next morning; and then on, through that lovely and well-known country which I have once before described to you — dressed in its garb of spring, I never saw a more enchanting. Perhaps the absolute unvaried greenness was almost too *raw* and overpowering, in spite of the multitude of white buildings that crowned every height and studded hill and valley, and the red-tiled roofs and brown-ploughed fields, that were scattered through the landscape. The range of Saltzberg mountains, covered with snow, was superb upon the left; and the evening gave us some of the most glorious sunset scenery I ever beheld.

About one o'clock of the 18. passed Shaerding, the frontier town of Austria, without trouble, getting the discharge of my surety for articles *plombé* at Semlin; and thence on to Passau — a beautiful town at the confluence of the Inn and Danube, where I dined. Never do I remember seeing a

country so exquisitely varied with coppice wood, hedge and hedgerow, scattered trees, paddocks, meadows, and fields, all dotted with villages, spires, houses, and every sort of building, in masses and separate. Then the extraordinary waving nature of the ground, so complicated and so beautiful!—but I have no time to discribe it. Allons!

The ride from Passau up the Danube banks is beautiful—the road excellent; but these Austrian drivers are so slow; they go much better in Hungary when the road will let them. Night passed without accident or adventure, and the morning of the 19. saw me at Ragensburgh, (Ratisbon,) where I breakfasted. The front of the cathedral here is handsome, in the florid Gothic style—its gate of entrance particularly beautiful. There is a fine bridge of stone, too, over the Danube, below which is a line of mills, and the town itself seems curious and well worth seeing.

For a few miles upwards, the scenery continues beautiful. Leaving the river to our left, we turned up a capital road, which leads to the higher plateau of Bavaria; and here the scene alters greatly: but you will not thank me for again describing the bleak-looking downs, cold soil, dark pine-woods, and inferior climate of this part of Germany, which, however, is well cultivated, has roads that now are excellent, and an air of attention to improvement, such as finger-posts, milestones, posts with the names of places, &c. that speaks loudly in favour of the care of government in such matters. Indeed, it is perhaps in small states, that resemble

rather the property of an individual than the kingdom of a sovereign, that such minutiæ are best attended to; except where the whole community are sufficiently enlightened and public-spirited to exercise a local jurisdiction in promoting these laudable purposes.

At six in the morning of the 20, reached Wurtzburgh. I was much struck with its splendid palace of red stone; how much superior to any of our English palaces, excepting Windsor! Its grand castle, its churches, and saint-crowned bridge are all well worth stopping for; but on we go, and reach Frankfort about eight at night, after passing through the new and thriving town of Ofen, erected by Bavaria as a sort of rival to the former. After calling at the British embassy, and a late dinner, off to Mayence, which I reached by a little after three on the morning of the 21. and remained to embark in the steam-boat which sails every morning, I believe, from hence, at six, and goes down the Rhine to Cologne in about twelve hours.

The voyage was delightful, although the day was cold. The scenery altogether fascinating; but how should I, travelling post, and shooting like an arrow down the stream, attempt to describe this well-known and splendid panorama of rock and wood, town, village, and castle; vine-covered hills and rich plains; with its classic associations and its romantic traditions; its tales of love and war; its Drackenfels; its Ehrenbreitsteins, that remind you of "Roland the Brave" and a thousand other spirit-stiring heroes and heroic events; far be it from me

to put a patch on the work which has employed so many bright geniuses—I hurry on; for home, for home and you, dear ——. So, reaching Cologne with its seven kings and fine cathedral, about six, and picking up a few bottles of Jean Maria de Farina on my way to the posthouse, behold me off before seven, whisking through St. Juliers and Aix la Chapelle, as fast as Prussian exactitude and steady Prussian drivers would permit; reaching Liege by seven in the morning; passing through a beautifully waved and rich country, but with a vile mist and blighting wind, through St. Trond and Tirlemont to Brussels; a more comfortable drive than in my miserable break-down rattletrap of a carriage on my way out.

Hearing that a government steam-boat was to sail at eight next morning from Ostend for England, I resolved to try and overtake it. So, instead of proceeding to Calais, after a good dinner at the Belvue Hôtel, off I went again to see what a little extra pay would do in quickening the movements of Flemish postilions. And, truth to say, they did well; for at five in the morning of the 23. May, I overtook the ambassador's courier, and at seven entered the Hôtel d'Angleterre, kept by a widowed Englishwoman, in the town of Ostend. I say nothing of the flat rich country we bowled through —cut as it was into innumerable small inclosures, nor of the towns of Ghent and Brüge, each so well worth looking at; for we have only time to snatch a bit of breakfast, and get on board the packet, a nice little vessel, which sailed about half-past eight.

Oh! how how I snuffed the dear salt air, and hailed the muddy water of the narrow channel that now alone divided me from "mine own countrie." The said muddy water, I suppose, owed me somewhat of a grudge; for it soon grew rough; and I, on plea of requiring repose, took my berth upon a locker on the lee side of the cabin, from whence I did not lift my head till we were close in with the cliffs of Dover, thereby avoiding a fit of sea-sickness.

After a fine passage of seven hours and fifty minutes I had the heart-felt delight of feeling my foot once more press solid British soil, after an absence of more than eighteen months, during which time assuredly I had more than once cause to fear I might never have that happiness again. The ceremonies of our blessed custom-house, and other matters, occupied some time; so, it being useless to reach London before next morning, I ordered horses at one A.M. and prepared to spend the intervening hours as comfortably as might be. But comfort or even rest to a mind so excited as mine was impossible. I looked out upon the people passing to and fro, "mine own countrymen," and my heart warmed with a thousand feelings, of which impatience was not the least. I went to bed, but no sleep came; and I cannot tell you what a relief it was to me when the "ostler" came to call me at the appointed hour. Away we drove like lightning; it was no heavy German or phlegmatic Belgian that wielded the whip now—these were not Turkish nor Hungarian roads: all was English, and so was the pace we went at. Canterbury was

soon passed; so was Rochester and Dartford; and there, there at last, is the river with its multitudinous shipping—there is the dear coal-smoke—there is the grand dome of St. Paul's looming large through it. Hurrah! We dash over Westminster Bridge once more. Away to Downing Street, and, thanks be to God, home, home!

THE END.

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